BITS OF CAMBRIDGE HISTORY

BY

SAMUEL FRANCIS BATCHELDER

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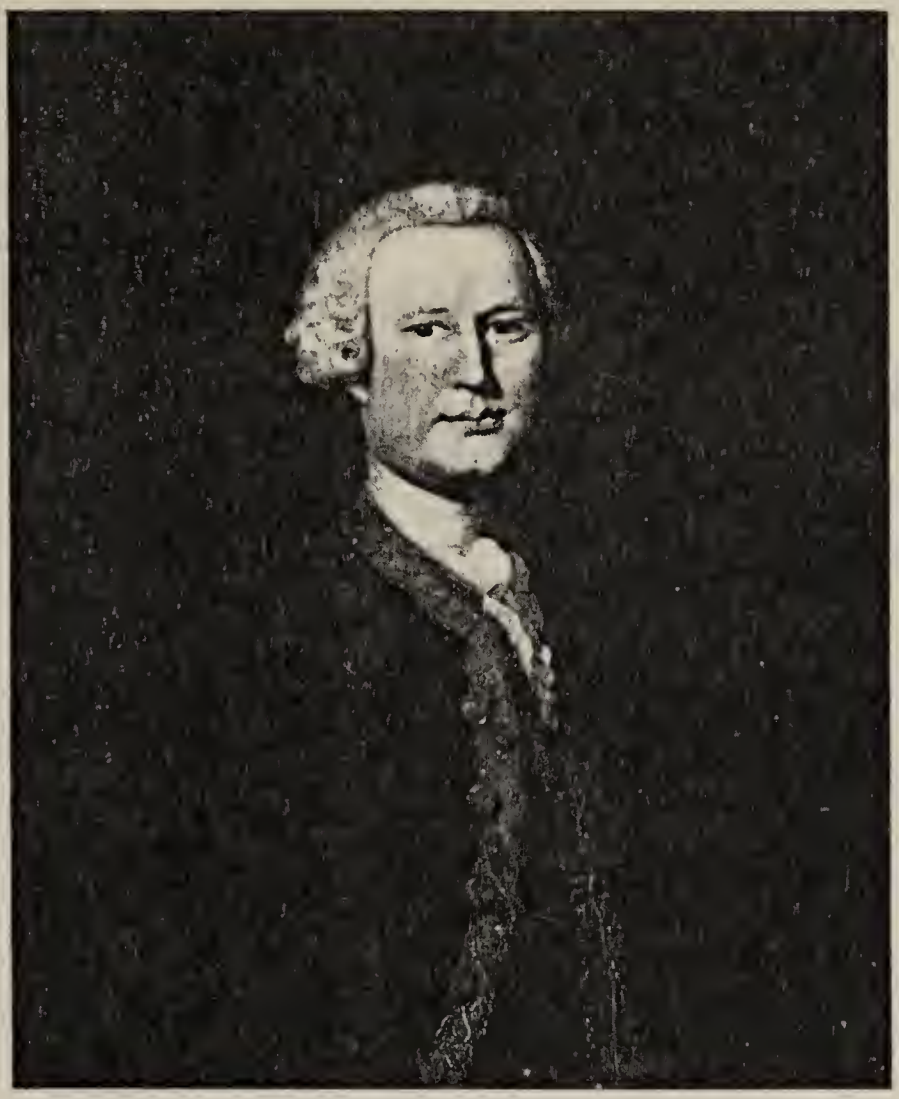

HENRY VASSALL

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CAMBRIDGE HISTORY

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I

BURGOYNE AND HIS OFFICERS IN CAMBRIDGE 1777–1778

Of all the episodes connected with the history of the old mansion on Brattle Street still associated with the name of Colonel Henry Vassall,[1] its owner from 1741 to his death in 1769, and occupied by his widow Penelope until the exodus of the Tories from Cambridge in 1775, none is more piquant than the part it played in that almost forgotten chapter of Cambridge Revolutionary annals beginning on the sixth of November, 1777. On that date the little village, which had suffered so severely from its occupation by the American army during the Siege of Boston, found itself again invaded — and this time by the enemy. But it was a peaceful invasion, and an enemy without hostility, indeed without weapons, being in short the heterogeneous horde of British and Hessian [2] prisoners under Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne — commonly known as the

[1] For a full account of this famous Old Cambridge house, see *post*, chapter II.

[2] "Hessian" is used throughout this paper in its generic sense only. The mercenaries from Hesse-Cassell who have given their name to all the German troops in the Revolution were not in this campaign. Burgoyne's auxiliaries, originally numbering about 4500, were furnished almost entirely by the Duke of Brunswick.

"Convention Troops" — on their way from the fatal field of Saratoga to the transports that were expected soon to embark them at Boston and return them to England, according to the terms of their surrender.

Nevertheless the prospect even of their temporary stay in town was thoroughly alarming. "Is there not a degree of unkindness," exclaimed the wife of Professor Winthrop, "in loading poor Cambridge, almost ruined before this great army seemed to be let loose upon us? What will be the consequences, time will discover. . . . It is said we shall have not less than seven thousand persons [1] to feed in Cambridge and its environs, more than its inhabitants. Two hundred and fifty cords of wood will not serve them a week. Think then how we must be distressed." [2]

The first difficulty that presented itself was the lodging of the captive host. The ragamuffin rank and file, after surging through the streets for a few days of confusion, were securely if uncomfortably bestowed on

[1] In reality about five thousand three hundred.

[2] Mrs. Winthrop to Mrs. Warren. Cambridge, Nov. 11, 1777. Ellett, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 98. Although we often picture our ancestors as embowered in the forests, this does not seem to have been true of eastern Massachusetts, and long ere this date the question of firewood had become serious. Most of it was then being brought from Maine. The local emergency supplies had already been exhausted during the Siege of Boston. Wood for the Convention Troops therefore was one of the most difficult problems that the authorities had to face, and a deal of correspondence on the subject still survives.

Prospect and Winter Hills, a mile and a half away to the northward of the town (in what is now Somerville, then a part of Charlestown) in the rickety barracks left from the days of the Siege of Boston. "The whole neighborhood between Cambridge and Boston," wrote Captain Cleve of the Brunswick Battalion,[1] "is filled with these bare and barren hilltops, for the most part covered with barracks. Winterhill and Prospecthill, lying close by, have so many barracks that the former can lodge the German and the latter the English corps. These barracks have been erected without foundations, and with bare boards, through which, from above, below, and all around, drive in the wind, the rain, and the snow. They have no windows, only holes. . . . For five miles around, one sees neither trees nor bushes." [2]

[1] A valuable series of "Confidential Letters from New England, Nov. 15, 1777–Oct. 10, 1778" was published at Göttingen in 1779 by Prof. A. L. Schlözer in the fourth volume of his "Letter Exchange" (*Briefwechsel*). These confidential letters were by one of the German prisoners at Cambridge, whose name Schlözer somewhat ostentatiously concealed. Translations of these letters, and of other interesting Revolutionary material contained in the *Briefwechsel*, have been published by W. L. Stone in 1891 and by R. W. Pettingill in 1924; but neither is quite satisfactory, and neither, in spite of copious notes, gives any hint as to the writer. In the Library of Congress, however, there is an old German manuscript identical with these letters — either the original or a contemporary copy — which is signed by Heinrich Urban Cleve, a captain in the regiment of Rhetz, acting as brigade major to General Specht. In quoting from these letters therefore I have referred to them as by Cleve, citing the volume and page of Schlözer.

[2] Letter of Dec. 18, 1777. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 375. For a detailed history of these structures, see "Barracks on Cambridge Common," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, xxviii, 598.

The hardy British veterans and their stolid German allies were well accustomed to privations, but the prospect of passing a winter in such bird-cages was almost insupportable. They had left their warm clothing in Canada, and now could scarcely obtain a pair of mittens. In the mere hope of getting warm and dry, many deserted into the country — to the delight of the Yankee farmers, who obtained their services for little or nothing. But their story is a tale by itself, and with the fighting men of the force we shall have here little more to do.

With the haughty officers the case was more complex. Almost three hundred [1] of them filled the streets of Cambridge, "prancing and patrolling in every corner of the town, ornamented with their glittering side-arms," and "in a manner demanding our houses and colleges for their genteel accommodation." [2] Despite the resentment and indignation of the inhabitants, the newcomers had right on their side. A solemn promise had been made them by General Gates, in the seventh article of the "Convention" under which they had laid down their arms, that during their detention they should be

[1] See the signatures of 192 British and 101 Hessian officers attached to the original parole, now in the Boston Public Library. Printed in condensed form in O'Callaghan, *Burgoyne's Orderly Book*, Appendix. There were a few more who never signed.

[2] Mrs. Winthrop to Mrs. Warren, *ubi supra*.

"quartered according to rank." But the attempt to fulfil this promise presents a series of complications as curious and involved as perhaps any episode in local history — and very little to the credit of Cambridge.

To follow the ramifications of the plot we must examine almost every set of contemporary records: The Parliamentary Register, the Journal of the Massachusetts House, the minutes of the Council in executive session, their records as a concurrent legislative body, the Massachusetts Archives, the Cambridge town records, the books of the Harvard Overseers, Corporation, and Faculty, the papers of the military department of which Boston was the headquarters, and the letters of Burgoyne, Heath, and many other and subsidiary actors — documents which are scattered from the Massachusetts Historical Society to the London Record Office.

And it is a rather remarkable circumstance that these records are so complete and so well preserved. The various parties involved were all more or less known to each other, and all within a radius of half a dozen miles. There was often need for haste; and one might expect that much of the business would have been arranged at hurried personal interviews, without documentary records. Today nine tenths of it would have been transacted by telephone or at the luncheon table, leaving no trace behind. But a spirit of meticulous accuracy seems

to have pervaded the affair. Not a conference was held, not a suggestion made, without being committed to writing. Documents were drafted, fair-copied, duplicated, engrossed, and even printed; and each of these forms was carefully docketed, filed, and preserved, so that every detail can still be followed *in extenso*.

Nor was speed sacrificed to accuracy. Letters were exchanged (by special messengers) with almost the rapidity of modern telegrams; and a note, a reply, and the ensuing official action frequently occurred within twenty-four hours. In as short a space of time committees were appointed, met, made their investigations, and reported their recommendations. Thus the whole story forms an unusually interesting example of our ancestors' methods of procedure in an emergency.

Piecing together this complicated mosaic, we obtain a narrative substantially as follows:

Making Ready — Cross Questions and Crooked Answers

It was on October 22, 1777, that the General Court of Massachusetts, then in session, was officially informed that on the 7th Burgoyne had surrendered to Gates at Saratoga, under articles known as a "convention," by virtue of which the prisoners were to embark at Boston

and sail for home, being quartered at Cambridge until their transports should arrive. The news was received with delirious joy in town and country. Cambridge took its full part in the celebrations. That night "the colleges were beautifully illuminated"; and the next, "the town of Cambridge was universally illuminated in high taste and elegance. A bonfire was made upon the common, where were fired a number of cannon,[1] answered by musketry from the troops stationed in Cambridge, in honor of General Gates. A number of principal gentlemen, both of the town and army, spent an agreeable evening in company, when [a long list of] toasts were drank, with the discharge of cannon. The rejoicings were introduced by the discharge of thirteen cannon in honor of the thirteen United States of America." [2]

On the 23d the legislature (Council and House of Representatives) appointed Messrs. Phillips, Gray, Hosmer, Cushing, and Austin a joint committee "to consider what Provision &c. is necessary to be made for the Reception of the Prisoners taken at the Northward . . . *and for fulfilling Gen. Gates Engagement concerning*

[1] Probably including those which still stand there, having been left behind after the Siege of Boston.

[2] *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 23, 1777. For some time after the Evacuation, Cambridge, with its numerous barracks, etc., continued to be used as a recruiting station for new levies. See Drake, *Old Landmarks of Boston*, 383.

them."[1] Two days later, on the report of these gentlemen, both chambers resolved that another joint committee — Messrs. Taylor, Cushing, Gray, Hutchinson, and Crane — should fix the limits within which the officers were to be confined, and obtain therein suitable houses for the general officers and proper rooms for the other officers of rank, "*so far as may be consistent with a strict fulfilment of the Convention.*"[2] (These clauses are italicized to show the honorable intentions of the civil authorities.) For these purposes they were to advise with General William Heath, the commander of the local military department, who was of course to be in immediate charge of the prisoners, their guards, their rations, firewood, etc.

The House thereupon adjourned, leaving all details to the Council in executive session (there being no governor during this period). The latter body shortly discovered an important matter had been overlooked — the taking of the officers' paroles, a formality which had been stipulated by Article XI of the Convention. On November 1 therefore the Council voted that "whereas Major General Heath has at the desire of this Board undertaken to supply the army lately under the Command of General Burgoine . . . with their rations & with

[1] *House Journal* (printed) — "Court Records" (Council minutes), xxxviii, 145. It is significant that the latter clause was added by the Council.

[2] "Court Records," xxxviii, 153.

quarters," the taking of the parole should also be entrusted to him.[1]

On the 4th Heath replied with some irritation that he did not wish to get mixed up in an affair which, as it then stood, was bound to make trouble. "I find by conversing with the Committee lately appointed . . . that the parole which I am to take must be within such Limits as they perfix: And as it appears to me that a restriction to the Limits proposed will tend rather to disgust than gratify the Officers, I must desire to be excused from taking the Parole." In a supplementary letter he did however "take the liberty to present to your Honors what has appeared to me as proper Limits . . . altho' this Business seems by the Resolves of the Two Houses and the Opinion of the Committee to be out of my Jurisdiction." [2] The Council nevertheless insisted that as everyone else was too busy to take the paroles, and as "this Business naturally falls within his Department," it should "be therefore refered to him."[3]

The limits proposed by Heath were as follows:

Charles Town Neck at Swan's Shop, from thence the Cambridge road to the crossway which communicates with the said road between Mr. Codman's house and fort No. 3, the said crossway out to

[1] Council Records, xxi, 848. — Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 26. — Engrossment in Mass. Archives, 173/522.

[2] Mass Archives, 198/268 and 274. — Drafts in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 22.

[3] Nov. 4, 1777. Council Records, xxi, 853.

the road by Mr. Inman's house, said road up by Mr. Dana's house, and Captain Stedman's tavern round the corner down to Cambridge bridge, the bridge from the North end of Cambridge causeway by Mr. Welsh's shop, the Water Town road to the first turn beyond the late Lieutenant Governor Oliver's house, from Deacon Mills' house down the Charles Town road on to Cambridge Common, to the Menotomy road, said road up to Cooper's tavern, from Snow's tavern, the road down by the stone magazine, Medford bridge, and Charles Town road by Winter Hill down to the first mentioned bounds (the intermediate roads are within the parole).

P. S. If General Burgoyne should not be Quartered in Inman House the Limits may be restrained to the Road from Charlestown neck up to the Colleges from thence down to the Bridge.[1]

This on its face was an excellent arrangement, inasmuch as it included the considerable number of abandoned houses in Cambridge formerly owned by the local loyalists. That group of capitalists and wealthy government officials — Sheriff Phipps, John Borland, Major John Vassall, Judge Sewall, Widow Penelope Vassall, Judge Joseph Lee, Lieutenant-Governor Oliver, etc. — had been forced to flee the town when the Revolution began, leaving their elegant mansions to be confiscated by the patriots. On the road from Cambridge village towards Watertown, especially, these fine estates were so numerous that the street was known as "Tory Row." The small tenants who were now in precarious posses-

[1] *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. iii. These limits occur in a draft of a parole which Heath submitted to the Council, and which he dated Nov. 9, apparently thinking that matters would surely be adjusted by that time. "Deacon Mill" was a copyist's error for Deacon [Aaron] Hill.

sion could be easily disposed of, and the many handsome and spacious apartments would make unexceptionable quarters for large groups of officers — just as they had sheltered many of the American militia two years before, during the Siege of Boston. These limits the Council were accordingly inclined to approve.

But while this game of cross purposes was in progress the town of Cambridge had added its voice, and that in no friendly tone, to the general discord. The fears expressed by Mrs. Winthrop were an accurate epitome of the sentiment of the community; and before the prisoners reached Cambridge the inhabitants had hurriedly taken concerted action to protect themselves. On the 3d of November a special town meeting, held at the court house in Harvard Square, had passed the following vote:

That Abraham Watson Esqr, the Hon^{bl} John Winthrop Esqr Thaddeus Mason Esqr Col^{o} Bridge & Mr Samuel Whittemore Junr or the Major part of them Be a Committee to apply to the Committee of the General Court appointed to assign limits to the officers of the British Army lately made Prisoners by Major General Gates, who are to be on their parole, and to request of them that such limits may be no larger than what the Officers aforesaid are entitled to by the Articles of Convention lately agreed on by General Gates & Lt. General Burgoyne, & particularly, that those Officers may not be permitted to have the range of the Town of Cambridge which the town are of the oppinion they are not entitled to. And if they fail of success in their application to the Committee of the General Court, then they are to present a Petition to the Honble Council of this

from for the purpose aforesaid. They are also to apply to Major General Heath if they find it necessary.[1]

Amid such clashes and contradictions it may be imagined that the conferences between Heath and the joint committee were not exactly harmonious; they culminated in the following remarkable effusion:

Boston November 8th, 1775

Sir

The Committee of both Houses of Assembly appointed to Procure Houses for General Burgoyne and his General Officers, & Suitable Rooms for his other Officers of Rank, and to establish the Limits for the Officers and Privates in General Burgoyne's Army and Limits to prevent the Inhabitants from Coming to the Prisoners, have attended that Service, and agreeable to your Desire we agreed with Mr. Robert Temple for his House for General Burgoyne after which you advised us to omit that and to procure Mr. Inmans House we then told you we understood, Doctor Warren had taken Mr. Inmans House for a Hospital on which you Assured us that should not hinder our taking it for the General; and Advised us to Procure it, accordingly the Next morning we went and agreed with a Tenant living in said House, that General Burgoyne should come there, then discharged Mr. Temples House and since which we are informed that by your Order Doctor Warren has taken said House for a Hospital and the Tenant now refuses to let the General have it, & Assigns the above as a reason for his refusal — Now Sir the Committee are determined to take no further Steps relative to procuring a House for General Burgoyne, we are of Opinion it is Entirely owing to you that the Committee have had so much Trouble, and all proves abortive, and we expect you will yet put General Burgoyne into Inmans House. You informed the Committee that three or four Houses would be Sufficient for the other General Officers, and that you had Officers Barracks Sufficient for the Field

[1] Cambridge Town Records. It is to be observed, in connection with a later stage of proceedings, that Mason was a graduate, and Winthrop a professor, of Harvard College.

and other Officers since which the Committee have obtained the following Houses in Charlestown for the General Officers Mr Phillebrown's, The Widow Rands, The Widow Prentices except the West chamber, in Mr Hunnewells House two Front Rooms and one Chamber, and one half of Mr Adams's house[1] which is full equal to what you said would be enough and they are not only the best we could obtain near where the Troops are to be Quartered which the Articles of Convention require, & they are such as the Committee judge quite sufficient — And agreeable to the Order of the two Houses we have also agreed that the outside Bound for the Non Commissioned Officers and Privates shall be the line of Centry boxes, if placed where you informed the Committee they should be, And that the Inhabitants shall not pass any nearer to the Camp than the Line of Stakes Placed or immediately to be placed, about Thirty yards distance from the Centry boxes, and also we have Determined, That the Generals and other Officers shall not Exceed the Following Bounds on any pretence whatever Vizt — Beginning at Charlestown neck at Mr Swans Shop & from thence the Road Leading toward Cambridge till it comes to a Middle Road beyond Mr Pipers Tavern, thence up said Road till it intercects the road leading from Medford to Cambridge thence the right hand road by the Powder House and so on till it meets the road leading from Medford to Charlestown; thence that road to the first mentioned Place, and all within them Limits also the lane to Inmans House near Mr Codmans and the whole of Inmans Farm & no more — We are Sir with due respect your's

John Taylor	The Committee
Thos Crane	of the Two Houses
Israel Hutchinson	of Assembly [2]

[1] From subsequent claims for compensation it appears that the following houses in Charlestown were actually occupied: Thomas Fillebrown's, Rebecca Rand's, Rebecca Prentice's, William Hunnewell's (where General Hamilton was quartered), Peter Tufts's, Mary Frost's, and Thomas Brooks's. These were in the part of Charlestown now Somerville, along "Charlestown Lane" near the British barracks on Prospect Hill. In several cases the houses were vacated altogether, the "families and effects removed." See *Mass. Province Laws*, xxi, 295; also 478 for damages done by the troops.

[2] Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 24. — Copy in Mass. Archives, 167/431.

It will be seen that the committee had lent an attentive ear to the deputation from Cambridge, and had altered Heath's proposed limits by leaving out that town altogether except Inman's farm (now the region around Central Square), virtually confining the officers to the present Somerville. Such an arrangement appeared logical enough, since it followed strictly the provision of the Convention that "the officers are not, so far as circumstances will admit, to be separated from their men," and Somerville included the barracks already described. It also included "Ten Hills Farm," the magnificent seat of Robert Temple, Esq., to which the committee referred. That gentleman was a moderate loyalist, who after a somewhat inglorious retreat in 1775 had been allowed to return and reoccupy his mansion, and who would make a capital host to Burgoyne.

Yet the committee, in spite of all their bombast, must have been aware that their scheme of limits was entirely too small. Half a dozen ordinary farmhouses for the number of officers expected would never do, to say nothing of proper quarters for several more generals, British and Hessian. The Cambridge deputation could thus flatter themselves that they had already put a spoke in the Englishman's wheel, and ensured him plenty of vexation and delay. For these shifts and

squabbles had consumed so much time that matters were approaching a crisis. The long column of prisoners could almost be descried on the outskirts of Cambridge; and from Burgoyne, who was travelling a day or two behind the main body, had arrived an express rider with a formal demand for quarters to be in readiness.

The Massachusetts Council fully realized the gravity of the situation. With the policy of the Cambridge men and the joint committee they did not concur in the least. Taking official notice that "a disagreement" had arisen between Heath and the committee, in consequence of which "suitable houses have not as yet been provided . . . *which it is necessary should be immediately done to prevent the Conventions being broke,*" they promptly "*Ordered* that General Heath be & hereby is advised to take the Parole of the said Officers agreeable to the form he has exhibited & the Limits he has therein required & that he procure suitable houses for the accommodation of General Burgoine & the Officers aforesaid within said Limits." [1]

Thus endorsed, Heath at once took energetic measures. Throwing aside the committee's narrow scheme, and returning to his own plan, he issued orders to Col. Chase, his quartermaster, as follows:

[1] Nov. 7, 1777. Council Records, xxi, 861. — Copies in Mass. Archives, 167/430 and Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 26.

Headquarters, Boston, Nov. 7, 1777.

You will Immediately obtain proper Houses upon the best Terms you Can, for the Accommodation of Lieut. General Burgoyne, Major Gen[l] Phillips, Major Gen[l] Riedesel, Brig[r] Gen[l] Hamilton, and two German Brig[r] Generals [Specht and de Gall], having proper regard to their Rank, after which you will If Possible accomodate the Field Officers with proper rooms if attainable, you will procure the Houses between Charlestown Neck and Lieut. Governor Oliver's House on the Water Town Road in the Body of the Town of Cambridge on the Menotomy Road any where on this Side Cooper's Tavern, on the Road from Cambridge to Medford any where on this side the Stone Magazine, or on any of the Intermediate Roads within the before mentioned outlines. You will wait on Gen[l] Burgoyne, and acquaint him with this my order, and full Determination, to do all in my Power to make his Situation as Easy and agreeable as Circumstances will admit — *and in every Instance Strictly adhere to the Convention.*[1]

Welcoming a Lieutenant-General

The last sentence hints at the miserable situation presented by this time in Cambridge. The travel-stained officers were pouring into town with their men, only to find everything in confusion and no arrangements completed for sheltering them. Not a single householder had either honor or humanity enough to offer them even a temporary asylum. The highest ranks received no more consideration than the youngest subalterns. "The generals, Burgoyne, von Riedesel, and Phillips, wandered about some time without a roof over their heads, until they found lodgings at a high price in

[1] Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 27.

a Cambridge inn — a gloomy hole."[1] This was Bradish's (afterwards Porter's), the famous "Blue Anchor," just off Harvard Square. Their baggage was unceremoniously dumped in the middle of Cambridge Common.[2] Their plight was pictured by Burgoyne with a bitterness which few can blame: "After being pressed into Cambridge through bad weather, inconvenience and fatigue, without any preparation made to receive the superior officers, I was lodged in a miserable public-house; and, in ill health,[3] obliged to partake with Major-General Phillips two very small dirty rooms for ourselves, our aid-de-camps, and the staff of the army then present."[4] Phillips made an equally pungent comment of his own:

[1] Eelking, *Deutschen Hülfstruppen*, i, 334.

[2] Burgoyne to Heath, Nov. 12, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. vii.

[3] "My mind is broken down by agitation and my body with fatigue." Burgoyne to Howe. Oct. 20, 1777. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 141. General Glover, who was in charge of the escort, reported to Gates on Nov. 16: "After a troublesome journey of 13 days (some part of which time was very stormy — this with the badness of the roads was almost too much for Gen[l] Burgoyne's shatter'd constitution) we arrived safe in Cambridge." N. Y. Hist. Soc., Gates MSS.

[4] Burgoyne to President of Congress. Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 211. He used very nearly the same language to Gates: "I and General Phillips, after being amused with promises of Quarters for eight days together, are still in a dirty small miserable Tavern, lodging in a Bed Room together, and all the Gentlemen of our suite lodging upon the Floor in a Chamber adjacent, a good deal worse than their servants have been used to." Public House at Cambridge, Nov. 14, 1777. Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 37.

Sir,

I was last Sunday informed that a quarter was provided for me and that I could occupy it on Wednesday morning — the House formerly belonged to a Mr. Phips and is now held of the Committee by Mr. Mason. This morning I receive a message that Mr. Mason and Family cannot go out and consequently I have no quarter. . . . I require a quarter suitable to my rank of Major General, and that I will not interfere about it myself, but depend on you, Sir, for fulfilling the 7th Article of the Convention.

I have the honor, etc.

W. Phillips

Major-General Heath[1]

Now William Heath was a Roxbury farmer, but he was also an officer and a gentleman to the tips of his work-hardened fingers. His instincts of military courtesy towards a vanquished but equally high-spirited foeman (who was but asking for simple justice) were deeply revolted; and in much chagrin he wrote to Burgoyne:

I am exceedingly unhappy that your Excellency and General Phillips have not as yet such quarters as I sincerely wish or you desire; no endeavours of mine shall be wanting to effect it, and I can assure you it is the desire of the Council also.

I must desire your Excellency to move into one of the best houses that have been taken up, viz: Mrs. Vassall's or Mr. Inman's. It will be much more comfortable to yourself and agreeable to others, than being in a public house, and such removal shall not in the least abate our endeavours to procure you better quarters.[2]

Simultaneously he addressed a remonstrance to the Council, setting forth "the unhappy and disgraceful

[1] *Magazine of American History*, xiv, 91.

[2] Nov. 11, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, App., p. vi.

situation of General Burgoyne and his officers." [1] That body, plainly realizing the gravity of the situation, instantly advised him to extend the parole limits so as to take in Temple's house, and procure the same for Burgoyne and his general officers, "allowing Mr. Temple to remain in the house with him." [2]

The implied reproof did not pass unnoticed by the original joint committee. They at once sought an interview with the Council in order to justify themselves. The conference seems to have been as stormy as those they had held with Heath. Finally they were asked to state in writing what further steps they proposed to take to relieve the situation. This was a poser for the politicians who had promised to protect their friends in Cambridge, and they could think of nothing better than to throw up their job, in a queer mixture of pomposity and pettiness.

May it please your Honors

The Committee of the Gen[l] Court appointed to procure Houses for Gen[l] Burgoyne & his Officers & to appoint Commissaries to supply them with such Articles as are usually brought to the Boston Market the produce of these States; also to affix Limits both for Officers & Privates of s[d] Army & Limits to prevent the Inhabitants from mixing & trading with the Prisoners &c — also being advised by your Hon[rs] to supply Gen[l] Burgoyne & his Officers with Wines,

[1] Nov. 11, 1777. Mass. Archives, 198/289. See *post*, p. 38.

[2] Nov. 11, 1777. Council Records, xxi, 867. — Copies in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 34 and Mass. Archives, 173/559.

Rum, Brandy Sugar & other Articles the produce of the W. Indies, having most faithfully & constantly attended that Service & after frequent Consultations with Gen[l] Heath appointed good & faithful Commissaries who are now on the Spot & have been for some Time & are supplying both Officers & Privates agreeably to the Resolves of Court & Advice of y[r] Honors — the Committee also have affixed Limits for the Officers & Privates & for the Inhabitants — & have procured the best Houses possible within those Limits for the Officers agreeable to the Requisition of Gen[l] Heath — & agreeable to y[r] Honors Desire, last Week reported to Gen[l] Heath a Copy of which Report has been presented to your Honors; neither has he signified to the Committee any Deficiency in the Preparations made as set forth in s[d] Report But inasmuch as y[r] Honors have been pleased this Day to inform us that Gen[l] Heath has represented to your Honors that there is a deficiency of Houses for the Officers of Gen[l] Burgoyne's Army; also that y[r] Hon[rs] had advised Gen[l] Heath to extend the Limits of the Officers beyond the Limits prefix'd by the Committee & also had advised Gen[l] Heath to procure Houses any where in those extended Limits for them & desired us the Committee to inform y[r] Honors in writing what the Committee would do further — therefore in Compliance with y[r] Honors Request permit us to inform your Honors that inasmuch as Gen[l] Heath has rec[d] your Advice to extend the Limits & it seems he is determined to do it & as he has also been advised by y[r] Honors to procure Houses any where within those Limits we trust & believe he will also do that if in his Power & if not in his Power we trust your Honors will give him all the Assistance he can reasonably Desire.

We are very respectfully

Y[r] Honors mo. obed. serv[ts]

JOHN TAYLOR
ELLIS GRAY
THO[s] CRANE
ISRAEL HUTCHINSON
} Committee of the Gen[l] Court

Boston Nov. 12, 1777.[1]

[1] "Report of Com[ee] to prepare Quarters for Gen[l] Burgoyne's Army in Consequence of a Conference wth Council." Mass. Archives, 168/11.

Meanwhile, to Heath's anxious offers Burgoyne rather tartly replied:

> The houses you mentioned yesterday are so exceedingly inconvenient, the one in point of size, and the other in being deficient in every article of furniture,[1] that to occupy either would make my condition worse than it is. The house of Mr. Temple would certainly suit me exceedingly well, and *should the great essential matters of public faith again take such a turn* as might justify me in accepting a favor, I should certainly hold myself obliged to you for your good offices to procure me that particular quarter.[2]

It is no wonder that the Englishman felt bewildered and aggrieved. For a week, after the signing of the Convention of Saratoga, he had been honorably entertained, with every attention befitting his rank, at the luxurious town house of General Schuyler at Albany, where "a table of twenty covers" had been spread for himself and his party. On the road to Cambridge, also, he had been treated with the greatest consideration. At Hadley, tired out and half sick, he had spent several days at the house of Sheriff Elisha Porter, who had shown him such kindness that upon leaving he had presented his host with his dress sword "in token of high esteem and gratitude." [3] His present position therefore was a contrast

[1] A temporary tenant of the Inman house after the Siege of Boston found nothing in it but a single bed, some broken chairs, and an iron skillet. *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 245.

[2] Nov. 12, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. vii.

[3] This sword is still preserved as a priceless heirloom by the Porter family. It is at present in the possession of Francis R. Cooley, Esq., of Hartford, Conn. See Conn. Soc. Sons of the American Revolution, *Year Book, 1893/94*, p. 222.

Lt Governor Scane
Major Brigade Skane
Mr David Graden D Pay Master Genl

List of Brit
Officers
Capt 7th Oct
1777

Lt. Governor Scane
Major Brigade Skane
Mr. David Graden D. Pay Master Genl.
Mr. Jonathan Clark D. C. Genl.
Brigadier Genl. Hamilton
Majr. Brigade Kirkman
Majr. Brigade of the Advance Corps Capt. Freeman
Mr. Plokasley D. W. Genl.
Lt. Noble Orderly Officer to Genl. Phillips

Signed by
Robert Kingston D. A. Genl.

List of Butish
Officers
Capt 7th Oct
1777

I cannot speak with satisfaction upon what has passed and still passes here. The officers are crowded into the Barracks six and seven in a Room of about ten feet square and without Distinction of Rank. The General Officers are not better provided for. . . .

The only prospect that remains to me personally is that I shall be permitted to occupy a House without a Table, Chair or any one Article of Furniture for the Price of an hundred and Fifty pounds sterling till the first of April,[1] but the same sum is to be paid though I should embark in ten Days.

While I state to you, Sir, this very unexpected Treatment I entirely acquit M. Gen. Heath and every Gentleman of the military Department of any Inattention to *the publick Faith engaged in the Convention*. They do what they can, but *while the supreme Powers of the State are unable or unwilling to enforce their Authority, and the Inhabitants want the Hospitality or indeed the common Civilization to assist us without it, the public Faith is broke, and we are the immediate sufferers.*[2]

Touching this letter and its momentous sentence (here italicized) there will be more to say anon.[3]

The house described by the indignant Briton still stands just across the road from Harvard College. It had been built some fifteen years before by the Rev. East Apthorp, first rector of the Episcopal church in Cambridge, in such handsome style that it was sarcastically dubbed "The Bishop's Palace." It had subsequently been bought by John Borland, a wealthy loyalist who had absconded at the beginning of the war.

[1] This was the extent of Henley's lease. Of course £150 stg. represented an enormously greater sum in the depreciated American paper of this date.

[2] Public House at Cambridge, Nov. 14, 1777. Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 37.

[3] See *post*, pp. 92 *et seq.*

During the Siege of Boston it had been occupied by the American forces, and badly knocked about. It was at this period leased by a Captain Henley. That astute warrior had driven perhaps as hard a bargain as Cambridge landlords have ever made — which is saying a good deal in a town where the systematic fleecing of students has rendered the inhabitants past masters of extortion. Heath was utterly scandalized. "The sum which he gave for it," he declared, "was most exorbitant, as was the case in some other instances." "Why," he demanded, "line the pockets of some Individual who perhaps will ask three times so much for a house for a month or two, as he gives for the House and farm for a year?" [1]

Burgoyne himself waxed ironic over the appellation of his dilapidated domicile. "Having been amused, from day to day, for near a fortnight, with the expectation of proper accommodations, I was only at last relieved by consenting to pay, upon a private bargain, a larger sum for an unfurnished house out of repair, than would have been required for a palace in the dearest metropolis of the world." [2] Before he could move in he

[1] Heath to Council. Headquarters, Boston, Apr. 6, 1778. Mass. Archives, 199/97. The nature of the transaction may be judged from the remark that the "whole interest" of the tenant in a similar estate was "but £4 per annum." See p. 44 *post*.

[2] Burgoyne to President of Congress. Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 212. — Original in Public Record Office, London: Colonial Office, Class 5, vol. 95, p. 385.

was obliged to apply for the loan of such elementary furniture as "18 Chairs, 3 Small Tables & Green Cloath, 4 Setts Andirons, a few Trammels and Hooks." [1] It was about November 20 when he seems to have taken possession.[2]

Meantime Friedrich Adolph, Freiherr von Riedesel, the commander of the German contingent, was getting equally scurvy treatment. This was the more outrageous in his case because, besides his personal staff of seven persons, he was accompanied by his wife and three little girls, with a maidservant. After a few days at Bradish's, common decency compelled the removal of his party to a separate house, and they were transferred to the cottage close by, formerly owned by Judah Monis, the one-time teacher of Hebrew at Harvard. Here, subject to the impositions of a termagant landlady, they remained for some three weeks, sleeping on straw in one room and a garret, with their servants pigging in the passageways as best they might.[3] During this interval they lost all their personal baggage, probably stolen by the very militiamen set to guard it.[4]

In the end of November the Riedesels were assigned

[1] Nov. 17, 1777. Mass. Archives, 173/577.

[2] After Burgoyne's departure the "Palace" was occupied by Phillips, the second in command. Mass. Archives, 199/97 and 100; 217-436 (Apr. 6, 1778).

[3] Stone, *Memoir of Riedesel*, i, 217.

[4] Rosengarten, *German Allied Troops*, 143. The Hessians seem to have been unmercifully swindled on every hand at first. There was a good deal of

to the Sewall-Leehmere place, a mile away up "Tory Row" (Brattle Street). This was even more desolate than the "Palace." To make it habitable at all they were forced to hire from the American Commissary "two and a half dozen chairs, one large breakfast table, four tables, one night chair, two bedsteads with beds, two looking glasses, one tea board, two bureaus, and one large water kettle."[1] Yet in comparison with their former lodgings they were charmed with their quarters; and under the good German housekeeping of the Baroness the mansion became the centre of the social life of the foreign contingent.

How to Receive British Officers

Thus far we have considered only the pitiful pettifogging by which the sensitive and high bred commanders were cozened out of their rights under the Convention. The experiences of the junior officers were even worse. Arriving, after a most trying journey, at the destination where they had been promised suitable shelter, they found nothing open to them but the street. This was the more dumbfounding because all along the road from Saratoga they had received every mark of compassionate kindness, and a rude but hearty courtesy. Indeed

wholesome awe felt for the British, but the outlandish "foreigners" excited nothing but contempt.

[1] "Court Records," xxxviii, 164.

their hospitable and generous usage had been so surprising that they almost suspected it must proceed from some deep ulterior motive.[1] At their journey's end, however, in some equally mysterious manner, the conditions were suddenly reversed. Had they been so many lepers they could not have been more thoroughly outcast.

To get a roof over their heads they were obliged to squeeze into the little cubicles built into the corners of the crazy barracks where their men were confined. November was a bitter month that year, and the searching northwesters on the hilltops drove through the loose boarding as if it were so much mosquito netting. Ensign Anburey of the 21st Regiment has left a vivid account of their sufferings:

> We reached the barracks on Prospect Hill very late in the evening, which were unfortunately in the worst condition imaginable for the reception of troops, being so much out of repair that we suffered severely from the inclemency of the weather; the barracks were in fact bare of everything; no wood, and a prodigious scarcity of fuel, insomuch that we were obliged to cut down the rafters of our room to dry ourselves. The method of quartering was dreadfully inconvenient, six officers in a room not twelve feet square.[2]

Sergeant Lamb, of the Royal Welsh Fusileers, speaks from the point of view of the rank and file:

[1] Letter of Nov. 30, 1777. *Travels through America*, ii, 59.

[2] "The treatment of the officers and troops in general is of so extraordinary a nature in point of generosity that I must suppose it proceeds from some other motive than mere kindness of disposition." Burgoyne to Howe. Albany, Oct. 20, 1777. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 141.

It was not infrequent for thirty or forty persons, men, women, and children, to be indiscriminately crowded together in one small, miserable, open hut. The officers, without any regard to rank, were frequently crowded six or eight together in one small hut. In the night time, those that could lie down, and the many who sat up from the cold, were obliged frequently to rise and shake from them the snow which the wind drifted in at the openings.[1]

An additionally cheerful circumstance (which seems to have been successfully concealed from the new arrivals) was that these barracks had just been used as an "inoculating hospital" for the smallpox.[2]

Even their jailers were mortified at their condition. Col. Lee, in charge of the guards, reported them

exceeding uneasy with respect to their Quarters, as the cold weather approaches fast, & but very little wood renders their situation very disagreeable. . . . This morning rode round the lines and found the Field Officers & some Others walking by their Barracks to keep themselves from perishing with cold; not one stick of Wood to put into the Fire, & if some other method cannot be found to supply them they must either perish or burn all the Publick buildings.[3]

As a final insult, they seem to have been told that they were getting all they deserved, and need look for no improvement in their situation.

[1] *Journal of Occurrences in the American War*, 195.

[2] Resolve of Apr. 8, 1777. Mass. Archives, 213/170.

[3] Lee to Heath. Cambridge, Nov. 14, 1777. Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 38. In a supplementary report he complains of their pulling off barn doors and carrying away fence rails for fuel. Heath mentions on Jan. 27, 1778, that a bakery and dwelling house built by one Blodgett near Winter Hill during the Siege of Boston had been gradually stripped "until nothing remains." To Laurens. Heath Letters. MSS. Library of Congress.

In spite of such a reception, so different from what they had been led to expect, the officers maintained the traditions of the service by exhibiting an admirable self-restraint and cheerfulness. Anburey, it will be noticed, makes no recriminations; and the committee of the Council reported "the Officers of the British Army much disposed to peace & good order," and ready to sign the parole "as soon as furnished with proper Quarters," or even promised them "within eight or ten days." [1] But that promise was not forthcoming; and the unfortunate officers, packed into tumbledown sheds that a self-respecting dog would have sniffed at, seemed doomed to shiver on their hilltop until the freezing of the nethermost pit.

Now John Burgoyne, whatever his merits or demerits as a wit, a playwright, or a parliamentarian, had as a military man at least one trait that deserves remembrance. He was one of the most humane and considerate officers of his day, one of the first commanders to break away from the iron rigidity that Frederick the Great had imposed on the profession as the ideal of army discipline, and to adopt the modern view that the soldier is a thinking human being, with feelings as sensitive as (and in many instances far more sensitive than) those of the politician who sends him out to stop a bul-

[1] Nov. 13, 1777. Council Records, xxi, 871. — Mass. Archives, 168/12.

let. If he was nicknamed "Gentleman Johnny" it was because he *was* a gentleman, and possessed to the full that characteristic which is said to lie at the very foundation of a gentleman's nature — regard for his inferiors. As a result he was adored by his men. In the words of one of his Irish sergeants, "he possessed the confidence and affection of his army in so extraordinary a degree that no loss or misfortune could shake the one, or distress or affliction weaken the other." [1]

He was equally adored by his officers, not only because he demanded (and obtained) the very best professional service that in them lay, but because he made them his personal friends, watched over their comfort with fatherly care, and protected their interests with jealous promptitude. Although thoroughly alive to his own prerogatives, he was no less determined to secure the rights of those for whom he was responsible. He felt the full force of those weighty words *noblesse oblige;* and like the captain who is the last to leave the sinking ship, he did not propose to take advantage of his rank to abandon his subordinates to their fate — or, as he expressed it, "to separate my lot from that of the army." [2]

Thus at the court of enqniry held on the American Colonel Henley for maltreating some of his prisoners,

[1] Roger Lamb, *Journal of Occurrences in the American War*, 184.

[2] Burgoyne to Heath, Nov. 12, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. vii.

Burgoyne would not entrust the prosecution to any of his staff, but appeared in person to press the charges and champion his men.[1] Thus while his whole army was shivering around empty fireplaces, he announced in general orders that in the matter of fuel "every favor and preference has been refused by the Officers in general till Justice could be done to the Private Men."[2] Thus when Gates, immediately after the signing of the Convention, obsequiously offered him a private passage to England at once on a government vessel, the offer was declined as "unacceptable"; and the American general, who had no more conception of such a code of ethics than of Vedic philosophy, could never for the life of him understand the reason why.[3] His own code being merely to look out for number one, he would have regarded it as the height of foolishness had he known that Burgoyne was writing to Sir William Howe, the commander in chief, "I set out immediately for Boston, where I shall spare no pains for the arrangement and convenience of the troops till your orders arrive."[4]

[1] During these long-drawn proceedings Cleve notes: "General Burgoyne has more than once proved himself a great pleader — has even caused the entire court to shed tears." Letter of Jan. 13, 1778. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 383.

[2] Nov. 16, 1777. *Hadden's Orderly Book*, 329.

[3] Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 142.

[4] Albany, Oct. 25, 1777. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 144.

So when Heath offered the Englishman, stived up in the publie house at Cambridge, the first ehoiee of the best quarters, he replied:

Sir,

I have the Honor of your letter of the date of this day; and have only to return in Answer, that *till the infringements of the Convention are redressed* in regard to the quartering of Offieers partienlarly, I eannot consistently with my duty or prineiples aeeept personally of any other accommodations than such as I have the misfortune to be Subjected to at present; should it please the will of your Government to make them worse, I persuade myself, I shall eontinue to persevere as beeomes me.[1]

And so the first protest whieh he made was in behalf not of himself but of his subordinate officers. After a personal inspeetion of their situation, he wrote, overflowing with indignation, to Heath as follows:

Publie House at Cambridge, Nov. 10th, 1777.

Sir,

I am under the Neeessity, and I am persuaded you will partake my eoneern, of returning to you the proposed parole unsigned, the British regiments having unanimously insisted that the Convention is infringed in several circumstances but partieularly in the Artiele expressing that every Offieer shall be quartered aeeording to his rank. . . . Sinee I have had occasion to visit the barraeks myself, I am in honour & duty, and the fullest eonvietion, eompelled to join my voiee with the other Offieers, and assert that the Quarters allotted to them would not be held fit for Gentlemen in their situation in any part of the World. I have seen many jails preferable; and in the worst of them a man willing to purehase spaee may generally be indulged so far as not to Cook, eat, and lie at the rate of six persons

[1] Nov. 11, 1777. Mass. Archives, 198/290. — *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. vii.

or more in a room about ten feet square. . . . There are many other complaints; & circumstances in the regulations which the Officers in general think want farther explanation, that I will not trouble you with, Sir, because it is my hope and belief, if reasonable men take them into consideration, they will be easily settled. But that the Article regarding Quarters shall be properly fulfilled, before any Parole is signed, is a Resolution that no Individual will depart from. In regard to General Phillips and myself I shall say little. Our treatment is new to us, though we are not Strangers to what it is to be in the hands of an Enemy.

We are fully convinced, Sir, we should have no cause of complaint were the Power of redress in you; but if the Bodies in which the great Authorities of your State are vested have not means or inclinations to enforce, nor the people hospitality nor Civilization voluntarily to grant, compliances *in matters of public faith*, we have only to Protest, and to claim a removal to some other district, not imagining it possible that the same ideas should subsist in two parts of America.

I have the honour to be, with great personal regard, and a due sense of your attentions

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant

M. Gen[l]. Heath. J. Burgoyne [1]

The quartering of the lower ranks thus became the crux of the whole situation. Upon it depended the signing of the parole, the pacification of Burgoyne, the good name of the town and the state, and, to no small degree, even the international reputation of the new republic: for the composite force of "Convention Troops" was soon to cross the water, and would spread far and wide, through both England and the Continent, the story how

[1] Mass. Archives, 198/287. — *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. iv.

the American government stood by its obligations. Upon it Heath and his assistants expended their most anxious efforts. We have seen his prompt and comprehensive orders to his quartermaster on November 7th. But those orders were singularly barren of results. Chase reported the next day that he had visited house after house within the assigned limits, only to be refused. With a sinister and baffling unanimity the inhabitants of Cambridge declined to recognize his authority or to relieve the tension of an *impasse* that was rapidly becoming dangerous as well as humiliating. Heath found in short that in a very literal sense he had reckoned without his host.

In this crisis he bethought himself of the buildings of Harvard College. These had all been used as barracks for the provincial forces two years before, and to concentrate all the officers in one or two of them now would solve the problem admirably, especially since it would prevent their "boarding promiscuously in families . . . which it is the wish of the legislature as much as possible to avoid." [1] He therefore addressed the Harvard Corporation as follows:

Head Quarters, Boston, Nov. 8, 1777

Revd Sirs,

Finding it extremely difficult if not impossible to obtain proper Quarters for the Field & Commissioned Officers of our Guards, and

[1] Heath to Burgoyne. Nov. 11, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. vi.

those of General Burgoyne's late Army without greatly distressing the Inhabitants, I am constrained to request the use of one or more of the Colleges, if you should think proper, which I submit to your Wisdom.

I am
Revd Sirs
Very respectfully
Your obed. H'ble Servt
W HEATH M G [1]

Rev^d. Corporation of
Harvard College

But to the exasperation and dismay of the American general, Harvard College adopted the same obstructionist tactics as the rest of Cambridge. For several days the dons maintained a pained and dignified silence, affecting to consider Heath's request as a demand (in the words of a professor's wife) for "the first university in America being disbanded for their [the officers'] more genteel accommodation." [2] Nothing of course was farther from Heath's thoughts. At this period the principal college dormitories were Massachusetts Hall, Stoughton Hall, and Hollis Hall. For many years their accommodations had been insufficient, and a large proportion of the students lodged in the town: the number of these would simply be augmented if one of the halls

[1] Harvard College Papers, ii, 34. — Draft in Heath MSS., Mass. Hist. Soc., vii, 30. In this draft the words, "N. B. Hollis Hall" are added, but struck through with the pen.

[2] Mrs. Winthrop to Mrs. Warren. Nov. 11, 1777. Ellett, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 98.

were turned over to the officers. To a stranger indeed the entire personnel seemed already to be scattered about Cambridge. Anburey remarked, "Neither the professors or students reside in the University; the former live in their own houses, and the latter board in the town." [1]

Such considerations however the Corporation ignored. Taking advantage of the fact that the president (Langdon) was away on business in Maine, they simply referred Heath's letter to the Overseers, the ultimate academic authority, — after which subterfuge several of the Corporation also found it convenient to leave Cambridge for the time being.

After waiting three precious days for a reply, therefore, Heath felt he could waste no more time with the Corporation, and laid his case directly before the Massachusetts Council, from whose attitude he had much more to hope.

The unhappy and disgraceful situation of Genl Burgoyne and his officers is the only reason that constrains me again to write you on the Subject of providing them with proper Quarters. . . . Ever since your Order of the 7th Instant my Quarter Master has exerted himself to the utmost of his power to procure suitable accommodations, but without effect.

The Officers now begin to appear disgusted as your Honors will observe by the inclosed. Without speedy redress the unfavorable impressions will have taken too deep root to be easily eradicated —

[1] *Travels through America*, ii, 67.

The honor of the State is in danger, — the public Faith responsible — circumstances will no longer admit of delay, — decisive measures must be immediately adopted and I cannot conceive of any so effectual as the appropriation of at least one of the Colleges, — to your Honor's Wisdom it must be submitted, as the means are not in my power, without offering violence to the Rights of the Constitution, which I wish ever to hold sacred. — [1]

The enclosure referred to is probably the following:

Substance of the remonstrances made to the general by the commanding officers of the troops of the convention, soon after their arrival at Cambridge.

. . . It was agreed, that the officers should be conveniently lodged, according to their different ranks. Instead of this article being fulfilled, we are put into barracks, made of single boards; five, six, and seven officers in one room, without any distinction of rank.

The soldiers barracks, in general, are so very bad, that the men are not sheltered from the cold, or rain, though they have offered themselves to repair their barracks, upon materials being delivered to them; they are twenty, and twenty-four in a room, three in a birth, are without candle, and scarce receive wood enough to cook their victuals, much less to warm their rooms. . . .

We feel much less concerned for our own private convenience, than for that of the troops under our command.

. . . We are well assured, that you will insist upon and obtain those advantages to which the convention intitles the troops; we imagine they ought, in justice, to be put upon the same footing as in the winter of 1775, when the British troops were in garrison in Boston.

Signed by the brigadier-generals, and officers commanding corps.[2]

[1] Head Quarters, Boston, Nov. 11, 1777. Mass. Archives, 198/289. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 34.

[2] *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 215. Cf. the "Humble Representation" addressed by Riedesel to Burgoyne on the same subject. Stone, *Memoirs of Riedesel*, i, 219.

At the same time Heath wrote to the impatient Burgoyne, concealing his real feelings under a mask of sternness evidently intended to "save his face":

I can by no means admit that the Convention is infringed in any instance. Necessity has compelled me to quarter a larger number of captains and subalterns in a room than usual, but this was by no means to remain. The procuring new quarters for the field officers would make room for others; and as I assured your Excellency no care or attention should be wanting in me to make the situation of the officers as easy and agreeable as circumstances would admit of; I have been endeavouring to effect it, and hope I shall succeed. . . . That the article regarding the officers quarters shall be properly fulfilled is my determination, and that as soon as possible, but that they shall not take the liberty of the limits of a parole before they have signed it, is a resolution that I will not depart from, and I expect that they govern themselves accordingly.[1]

Now in putting his dilemma before the Council, and begging for their assistance in obtaining a college dormitory, Heath had done a very shrewd bit of business. For he had also stirred up the Harvard Overseers, a body whose views were very different from the Corporation's. This double result came about from the fact that by the system then in force the Council were ex-officio members of the Overseers, and indeed made an overwhelming majority there.[2] The situation was

[1] Nov. 11, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. v.

[2] The members of the Council who are recorded as present at these meetings — mostly with praiseworthy regularity — were Jeremiah Powell (President), Benjamin Austin, Nathan Cushing (A. B. 1763), Thomas Cushing (A. B. 1744), Timothy Danielson (Hon. A. M. 1779), Richard Derby, Jabez

precisely that of modern "interlocking directorates"; so that by appealing to the Council the harassed general was really killing two birds with one stone.

The consequences were both gratifying and instantaneous. The Council, *qua* Council, refrained, it is true, from intermeddling at once with the private affairs of the college, and contented themselves with appointing Messrs. Derby and Austin a special committee "to proceed immediately to the Town of Cambridge & endeavor to procure suitable houses for General Burgoine's officers in such ways & manner as they shall think most adviseable." [1] But *qua* Overseers they were, in baseball parlance, "on their home grounds." That same day they had held a meeting to consider Heath's application of the 8th to the Corporation, which, as we have seen, the Corporation had passed on to them. The brief and formal terms of that note, however, had not impressed them very strongly, and "after some debate and con-

Fisher, Abraham Fuller, Henry Gardner (A. B. 1750), Samuel Holten, Daniel Hopkins, Oliver Prescott (A. B. 1750), David Sewall (A. B. 1755), Josiah Stone, John Taylor, Artemas Ward (A. B. 1748), John Whitcomb, and Benjamin White (A. B. 1744). At the Overseers' meetings appeared Powell, Austin, N. Cushing, Danielson, Derby, Fisher, Fuller, Gardner, Holten, Hopkins, Prescott, Stone, Taylor, Ward, Whitcomb, and White, with Rev. Dr. Andrew Eliot (A. B. 1737), the secretary of the board, Rev. Dr. Samuel Cooper (A. B. 1743), Rev. Dr. Gordon, and Mr. John Lathrop (Hon. A. M. 1768).

[1] Nov. 11, 1777. Council Records, xxi, 867. — Copy in Mass. Archives, 168/8.

ference on the subject" they had adjourned to the next afternoon without taking any action.[1]

On the 12th they accordingly reconvened after the meeting of the Council, and indeed without leaving the council chamber. This time they so far exceeded their technical status as to consider also the general's appeal to the Council. Its alarmingly plain language woke them up most effectually, "and having been informed by General Heath that after repeated attempts to procure Quarters for said officers among the dwelling houses in Cambridge, he has not been able to succeed, tho' the most generous price has been offered; and being willing *in a case of such public importance & necessity to do all in their power to secure the public honor, peace, and safety,* do earnestly and unanimously recommend it to the Corporation to consent that one or more of the buildings of the College be allowed to the above-mentioned Officers." (This was as far as they could go, since the actual ownership and management of the college property was vested in the Corporation.) They also voted that in the absence of President Langdon "Dr. Appleton the Senior Fellow of the College be served with a Copy of the preceding vote and be desired immediately to call a Meeting of the Corporation to take it into consideration." Then, evidently thinking that

[1] Overseers' Records, iii, 122.

the Corporation would bear watching, they adjourned to the next day.[1]

The Great Cambridge Conspiracy

Matters were now moving rapidly. On the 13th Messrs. Derby and Austin, the special committee of the Council, reported that they had "spent the Day at Cambridge on that Business," that the officers' quarters "at present are in several Respects Inconvenient & *not Such as they have a Right to Expect*," that they had done their best to hire sufficient private houses "for the Gen[l] Officers & such Commission Officers, as are not furnished with Quarters, & such as are Crouded where they now are, but the Committee are Led to think, that some pains had been taken, to prevent the People who have Hired the Houses Lately owned by Persons who have Joined the Enemy, Letting said Houses for that purpose, and therefore have only been able to agree for one, Namely for the House Lately the Widow Vassalls." As to the use of a college building they reported that so many of the Harvard Corporation were absent that a meeting could not be held till the next day; "but without one or more of the college houses we are of opinion that sufficient houses cannot be obtained," — although

[1] *Ibid.*

Mr. Hall, one of the tutors, had promised that he would procure several other houses and so relieve the college.[1]

The chief interest of this report lies in the way that Derby and Austin, in their disgust and irritation, had fairly and officially let the cat out of the bag. The committee appointed at the Cambridge town meeting had not confined themselves, it appeared, to their specified duties, but (acting doubtless on the unrecorded "sense of the meeting") had instigated the householders of the village to enter into a regular conspiracy to exclude the British officers from the quarters which Heath originally intended for them. Such townsmen as were ready and willing to do their part in carrying out the Convention had been coerced into the opposite course, in order that the whole town should form a sort of *mare clausum* to the bearers of his Majesty's commission. Let the officers herd with their men in the barracks! Even that was too good for the bloody lobsterbacks. Never mind what they had been promised. The promise to send them home to England was bad enough, and a mistake that never should have been made. Compared to that, what did this signify? Let them have a taste of hardship before they started!

The plot of course was obvious long before it was officially noted by the committee of the Council. No

[1] Council Records, xxi, 871. — Mass. Archives, 168/12.

collection of diverse and disparate humanity could present such an unbroken front without concerted intent. Even the prisoners themselves knew the story. "The Officers," wrote Burgoyne in his first letter to Heath, "feel these hardships the more greviously as they have reason to believe there are many inhabitants within the limits proposed willing to receive them as lodgers were they at liberty so to do." [1] At a later date he stated the case more fully:

> There were, at the time of the above complaints, houses more than sufficient for the purpose, some of them, as I have been informed, under sequestration, and possessed only by tenants at will, over which the council of the Massachusetts had consequently controul; others possessed by persons who would have been willing to receive officers, had they not been prevented by the committee of Cambridge.[2]

Ensign Anburey was not so specific, but was sufficiently accurate, when he wrote, "Permission was denied us to accommodate ourselves with rooms in this town, till General Burgoyne arrived, and represented our situation to the Council at Boston, when it was reluctantly granted." [3] Heath himself admitted in his published account of the affair that "some individuals were refrac-

[1] Nov. 10, 1777. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. iv. — Mass. Archives, 198/287.

[2] Burgoyne to President of Congress. Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 211. — Original in Public Record Office, London: Colonial Office, Class 5, vol. 98, p. 385.

[3] Letter of Nov. 30, 1777. *Travels through America*, ii, 59.

tory," upon this point,[1] but was too politic to enlighten posterity further as to the failings of their ancestors.

It is thoroughly characteristic of the atmosphere which surrounded this miserable business that, in the face of such evidence, official and unofficial, as has been given above, and will be adduced hereafter, the committee of Congress, appointed later to consider Burgoyne's conduct, tried to whitewash the Cantabrigians with such pitiful excuses as "the sudden and unexpected arrival of so large a body of troops, the concourse of strangers in and near Boston, the devastation and destruction occasioned by the British army, not long since blocked up in that town, and by the American army which besieged them; and considering that the officers were not to be separated from their men, and that the troops could not be quartered with equal convenience in any other place within the limits pointed out and described in the convention, as there are not a sufficient number of barracks in any other part of that state." [2] From such disingenuous paltering, such pressing of side issues, one might suppose that the Congressional board had never heard of the Cambridge committee nor the determination of the town meeting that the officers should not "have the range of the town."

[1] Nov. 14, 1777. *Memoirs* (ed. 1901), 127.
[2] *Journals of Congress*, x, 32.

Nevertheless, that committee had done its spiteful work thoroughly and well. Not only the householders of Cambridge, but the staff of Harvard College, had received their cue. In consequence, the unusual housing facilities to be found in Cambridge — the numerous deserted mansions of the Tories and the ample halls of the university — were absolutely unavailable, and the unfortunate officers were, so to speak, starving in a land of plenty. They might have done better in the poorest frontier settlement.

The Siege of Harvard College

Against this barrier of prejudice and selfishness, now openly acknowledged, the Council (or, in other words, the Overseers) threw themselves in support of the gallant exertions of General Heath. At their adjourned meeting on the 13th, the Overseers considered Derby and Austin's report to the Council, and also the news, communicated by Dr. Eliot, one of the Corporation, that Dr. Appleton had called a meeting for the morrow. To await the action of that body, they thereupon adjourned to the next day.[1]

On the 14th accordingly the Corporation at last gathered their scattered forces to consider the situation that in spite of their evasions had been forced upon

[1] Overseers' Records, iii, 123.

them. Very ungraciously ignoring Heath's request of the 8th, they confined their attention to the vote of the Overseers recommending the use of a building for the officers. Nor would they meet even that issue squarely. One reason for their delay, it appeared, had been to give time for Mr. Tutor Hall to make a fresh canvass of Cambridge, so as to avoid their obligations by showing that there were, after all, plenty of houses available. Hall's success, where both civil and military authorities had failed so completely, shows at a glance the Cambridge men's selfish duplicity. What they had unanimously refused at the call of honor and the demands of humanity, they were instantly able to grant when danger threatened the college, by which (in one way or another) most of them made their livelihood.[1] Indeed the report unblushingly admitted as much:

The following Accommodations can be had for ye Officers of Mr. [*sic*] Burgoyne's late army.

At Lieut. Governor Oliver's late house . . . . . encumbred only by Mr. Treadwell, whose whole interest in s^d house is but £4:0:0 p^r Ann.	7 Rooms
At Judge Lee's A field Officer	2 Rooms
At Judge Sewall's late house . . . . . the State remitting to ye present possessors ye Rent of ye current year & removing their Effects	8 Rooms
Mrs. Vassall's house	10 Rooms

[1] In 1782 the French traveller Chastellux observed, "Cambridge is a little town, inhabited only by students, professors, and the small number of servants and workmen they employ."

Mrs. Wendell gives encouragement, that if giving up her house will preserve ye Colleges from ye possession of ye British Troops, she will endeavour to accommodate with . . . . . 7 Rooms

At Mr. Bradish's (Hunt's late house) . . . . . 8 Rooms encumbered only by Dr Foster's present Residence

At D^r^. Kneeland's A field Officer, or two . . . . . 2, or 4 Rooms

At Mr. Wigglesworth's two of our own field Officers

At Mr. Prof. Sewall's . . . . . 3 Rooms

Mr. Borland's late house may be had . . . . . 12 Rooms upon some conditions, or other

At Mr. John Hastings's . . . . . 1 Room

At Capt Stedman's . . . . . 2 Rooms

At Dr Moore's . . . . . 2 Rooms

At Mrs. Hicks's. . . . . 2 Rooms

N.B. ye two last mentioned places are Rooms already occupied by Officers.

S. HALL [1]

On the strength of this list the Corporation professed to consider the grounds of the Overseers' vote "now in a great measure, if not wholly removed. Nevertheless to demonstrate their readiness to comply with every Recommendation of the Board, & *to promote ye publick Honour, Peace & Safety*, the Corporation consent that ye House lately purchased by them for ye Residence of ye Students, containing 12 Rooms, be employed to ye above mentioned purpose, upon reasonable terms, in case it cannot be otherwise accomplished." [2]

[1] Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 37.

[2] "College Book," vii, 334. — Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 37. Present: Dr. Appleton, Dr. Winthrop, Dr. Eliot, Dr. Cooper, Mr. Hall, Treasurer Storer. The rent afterwards agreed on was $8 a week.

The house referred to was the somewhat notorious "Wiswall's Den" (bought by the College in 1772), occupying a part of the site of the present College House, in Harvard Square. It was "an ugly, three-story, brick-ended, wooden fronted" dwelling,[1] unsavory in more senses than one, and not what Heath wanted at all. The Overseers were equally disgusted with the Corporation's grandiloquent equivocation, and at their meeting on the afternoon of the same day, on reviewing the above action, decided to clear the decks altogether by recommending to the Corporation "immediately to dismiss the Students to their several homes." [2]

This appalling vote, by which the Overseers of Harvard seemed to abandon their allegiance and literally go over to the enemy, fell upon the Corporation like a bombshell. Well might they feel that they had been wounded in the house of their friends! Their artifice had not only failed, but had left them far worse off than before, since they now faced the evacuation of all the dormitories instead of only one, and the real "disbanding" of the university. Again they played for time by waiting till the 17th, when a regular adjourned meeting of their board was due. At that meeting the guardians

[1] John Holmes. *Harvard Book*, ii, 30.

[2] Overseers' Records, iii, 125.

of the college property held an agitated discussion. They could not openly oppose the Overseers, to whom they had voluntarily referred the question; and yet they were determined to hold the fort to the last shot in the locker. After much quibbling, they arrived at an apparent acquiescence, couched in terms at once dignified and mysterious. As there were "some matters of great importance to ye College, that are necessary to be Adjusted before ye Students are dismissed," the Faculty were "desired" to dismiss them "as soon as possible." [1] What these matters of great importance were has never been explained.

By thus bringing in the Faculty — the third and lowest collegiate board, consisting of the actual teaching force and concerned with the immediate administrative details of the institution — and by leaving the matter to their discretion, the Corporation had still further complicated the situation. As the Faculty were of course all residents of Cambridge, their hostile bias was the most pronounced of anyone's. This they showed at once, together with their interpretation of the responsibility entrusted to them. The holiday of Thanksgiving was close at hand (Nov. 20), when the students were always given a few days' vacation. But the very next day

[1] "College Book," vii, 336.

after the affair had been committed to them, the Faculty, fearful that the military authorities might steal a march on them if the college buildings were vacated for even a week, voted that whereas "the peculiar critical circumstances of the College at present render it highly inexpedient that the Scholars should be absent from the College at this time," therefore "no leave of Absence be granted to any of the Scholars to go home to Thanksgiving this Year." [1] Thus the attempt of the Overseers to get rid of the students at once, resulted only in making them sit tighter than ever!

The Massachusetts Council (virtually, we must remember, the Harvard Overseers) had also been watching the course of events with steadily increasing irritation and alarm. On Nov. 18 they appointed a new committee, Messrs. Cushing and Holten, to pierce if possible the fog of evasion and delay by enquiring of Heath whether enough houses really could be provided in Cambridge for the officers "Exclusive of the Colleges, & if not, How many Rooms are still Wanting." [2] On the same day Heath again addressed the Council, setting forth the situation in detail, since "the Officers are still extremely uneasy as to their Quarters." Either antici-

[1] Nov. 18, 1777. Faculty Records, iv, 74.

[2] Council Records, xxi, 880. — Mass. Archives, 173/587. — Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 45.

pating or replying to the new committee's enquiries, he observed:

> I was informed the last evening, that it was reported that near ninety rooms could be obtained, and that it would be needless to take any part of the Colleges, but if every room from the Garret to the Seller are counted in those Houses allotted to the General Officers, as there are twelve in the House occupied by General Burgoyne & his Suit, more than one half of the Ninety rooms pretended to be procured will be those of the General Officers, and we shall but deceive ourselves by such enumeration. . . . I most sincerely wish that the matter might be accommodated, and it appears to me that it might be easily done.[1]

Apparently feeling that he had not been sufficiently explicit, he summarized the matter in a supplementary note, which hints at fresh activities by the Cambridge committee:

> Quarters are not as yet provided at Cambridge sufficient for the accommodation of the Officers of Gen[l] Burgoyne's late army, neither do I conceive it practicable to obtain them Exclusive of at least one of the Colleges, as the Officers do most peremptorily insist upon being Quartered according to rank; besides several Houses which were supposed to have been engaged are now refused.[2]

This last touch of impudence brought the Council to the point where patience ceased to be a virtue. In their capacity of Overseers they had shot their bolt with little

[1] Mass. Archives, 198/296. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 44.

[2] Mass. Archives, 198/302. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 45.

effect: they now determined to exert their full power as the supreme civil authority, and since all other means had failed, to take a college building by executive enactment:

Council Chamber, Nov. 18, 1777

Whereas Major General Heath has represented to this Board that there has not been sufficient Houses taken up for the accommodation of the Officers Belonging to General Burgoyne's Army now Prisoners in the Town of Cambridge and that it is not practicable to obtain them exclusive of at least one of the colleges, and it appearing to the Council of the utmost Importance that the said Officers should be immediately Supplyed with suitable rooms for their accommodation

Therefore Ordered that Major General Heath be and he hereby is Authorized to take up such and so many rooms in one of the Colledges viz Massachusetts Hall as will be necessary to accomodate the Officers belonging to General Burgoyne's Army, now Prisoners in the town of Cambridge. Provided he cannot procure rooms sufficient for the accomodation of the said officers in the dwelling houses within the limits prescribed for the officers aforesaid. And Provided also the said Officers that shall be Quartered in the rooms in the Colledge will be answerable for all the damages that shall accrue to the Colledges by reason of their being placed there and pay a reasonable rent for the same. And General Heath is hereby desired to give due notice To the immediate Governors of the Colledge or the major part of them That the Students may have sufficient time to move their effects therefrom and secure the same.

To The Revd Doctor Nathaniel
Appleton senior fellow of
Harvard College, Cambridge.[1]

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[1] Council Records, xxi, 880. — Draft in Mass. Archives, 168/23. — Copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 44.

This unique document, unparalleled in the history of the college and of the state, was aimed directly, it will be seen, at the "immediate government," or Faculty, but was addressed to the chairman *pro tem* of the Corporation. It was also officially known to the Overseers, who met by adjournment the afternoon of the same day and reviewed the whole situation to date, but contented themselves with awaiting the outcome of the new developments by a series of further adjournments.[1] The commands of the highest civil authority, in short, were unmistakably heard in every corner of Harvard College.

Accordingly on the 19th General Heath, with the whole power of the Commonwealth behind him, had the satisfaction of writing to the "Governors of the College" as follows:

Head Quarters Boston Novr. 19, 1777.

Revd Sirs

The Honble Council of this State by an order of yesterday have directed that the Rooms in Massachusetts Hall should be taken up for the accommodation of the Officers of Genl Burgoyne's late Army if rooms sufficient for their accommodation cannot be procured in the Dwelling houses in the Town of Cambridge, the latter after repeated endeavours appears impracticable. I would therefore request that you will be pleased to give directions to the Students in Massachusetts Hall to remove their Effects as soon as possible. It is

[1] Overseers' Records, iii, 126.

with great reluctance that I ask this favor, and nothing but necessity could induce me to do it. —

I am
With great respect
Your Most Obd^t Servant
W HEATH M G [1]

Revd Fellows of Harvard College

Here was something that to the meanest intelligence must appear conclusive. Yet incredible as it may seem, the Faculty managed once again to stave off the issue by a mixture of the thinnest technicality and the weakest sentimentalism.

To the Honble Council of the State of Massachusetts Bay 20 Nov. 1777

May it please your Honors

An Order of the Honble Council of this State (accompanied with a Letter from Major General Heath) has been communicated to the immediate Governors of Harvard College . . .

Upon which we, the major part of the immediate Governors of Harvard College, beg leave to observe that the Students are not to remove their effects, but only in consequence of the *Provisos* above specified — With regard to the *first* Proviso, we think it our duty to acquaint the Honble Board that it appears from a Schedule laid before us by Mr. Hall, who was desired by a Committee of the Council to procure Rooms, that he has already engaged a greater number of Rooms than was proposed as necessary. — With regard to the *second* Proviso, we are at a loss to know, whom the Honble Board supposes these officers are to be answerable to, for the damages that may accrue to the College, and with whom they are to agree for the Rent to be paid. We conceive, that we have no authority to transact affairs of this nature. The College Estate is vested in the Corpora-

[1] Harvard College Papers, ii, 35. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS, vii, 46.

tion as Trustees; and we are humbly of opinion that every matter relating to that Estate lies with the Corporation. — As to the Students removing their effects and, what must be the immediate consequence, returning to their respective homes, we humbly apprehend, that it cannot be done upon very short notice, without subjecting the Students to great difficulties. Most of them cannot do it without assistance from their Parents, several of whom live at considerable distances.

All which is humbly submitted

J. Winthrop
E. Wigglesworth
Stephen Sewall
Stephen Hall
Ja. Winthrop
Benj^a Guild [1]

At the Faculty meeting when this interesting document was prepared, it was also voted "that Mr. Hall be desired to wait upon the Honble Council, and lay before them the Schedule of the Rooms already provided; and the foregoing Representation; and also wait upon General Heath with Copies of the same." [2] This Schedule was an amplification of Hall's first list, dressed out in livelier colors, and including the latest acquisitions, but (as Heath had pointed out) shamelessly padded by in-

[1] Mass. Archives, 168/24. — Copies in Harvard College Papers, ii, 35 and Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 47. John Winthrop was professor of mathematics, Edward Wigglesworth, of divinity, Stephen Sewall, of Hebrew, Stephen Hall and Benjamin Guild were tutors, and James Winthrop was librarian.

[2] Memorandum in Harvard College Papers, ii, 35. In the Faculty Record Book there are no minutes of this meeting of Nov. 20, but a space is left on the page.

cluding the quarters already occupied by the generals and their staffs:

State of quarters for Gen[l] Burgoyne & his Officers in the Town of Cambridge, already possessed, or ready to be taken possession of.

Mr. Borland's late House, 12 Rooms completely finished, besides upper Rooms fit to lodge in.

Late Judge Sewall's, 10 Rooms; 7 upright & handsome; one large convenient kitchen; two handsome & convenient upper Rooms fit to lodge in; also a garret fit for Servants to lodge in.

Mrs. Vassall's, a large house with many Rooms, ten, I am told, at least fit to quarter in.

Capt: Stedman's 2 large Rooms.
Mrs. Morse's 2 Rooms
Mr. Prof. Sewall's, Commissary Higgins & family.
Half of Widow Borland's late house, a large square house.
Col[n] Thacher's, an handsome Room, completely furnished.
College house, 12 Rooms.
Mr. John hastings's, one Room.
Mrs. Gookins's, one Room.
Six houses occupied by Officers on Charlestown Road.[1]
One field Officer at Mr. Marshes
A Commissary at Judge Lee's.
A field Officer at Mr. Howe's
Two Cap[ts] at Mr. Warland's
Two Cap[ts] at Dr. Moore's
A Cap[t] & Lieut: at Mrs. Hicks's.
Two, or three Officers at Mr. Welsh's
One Room occupied at Mr. Boardman's

Quarters that may be had.

At late Gov. Oliver's house, 7 Rooms.
Deacon Hill's 2 Rooms
Mr. Barrett's 2 Rooms.

S. Hall [2]

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[1] See note, p. 24 *ante*. [2] Mass. Archives, 168/27.

Heath, however, was not to be put off by this sort of thing. On Nov. 22 he ordered his quartermaster, Col. Chase, to arrange for the rent of College House, and also "for the Rent of Massachusetts Hall, as it appears impracticable to procure proper quarters for the officers of Gen[1] Burgoyne's army without the improvement of that College. . . . You will also wait upon the immediate Governors of the College & acquaint them of the necessity of Massachusetts Hall being cleared without further delay." [1]

And still, with the insensate tenacity of limpets on a rock, the Faculty clung to their hall. The Quartermaster might thunder on their doors; he was to realize as never before that the pen is mightier than the sword. The Council might issue its legal fiats; it had overlooked the maxim that possession is nine points of the law. The Overseers might impotently insist on their ultimatum; they were learning that the cloistered seclusion of academic life was no empty phrase. Had Harvard College existed under Henry VIII, that redoubtable dissolver of monasteries would there have met his match. Blind to the consequences, deaf to every order, and now dumb (as far as written records show) the "Immediate Government" literally held their own against

[1] Copy in Harvard College Papers, ii, 39. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 51.

all comers.[1] Another avenue of escape was opening before them. The House of Representatives was due to reassemble on November 26, and might take a more favorable attitude towards the college, its original creation and the recipient of its immemorial favors.

Sure enough, on the 27th the legislature, blandly ignoring the long-drawn battle that had been waged during its recess, began *de novo* by appointing a joint committee, Farley, Brown, and Cushing, with the novel (?) instructions "to confer with General Heath on the subject of procuring quarters for the officers of the Army lately under the Command of General Burgoyne, and report what is proper to be done." [2]

This was a crushing blow to the American commander. Dazed and exhausted by his fruitless struggle for Massachusetts Hall, he could not bring himself to reopen the whole question with the new committee. He determined instead on a fresh line of action. According to the report of the committee, he "informed them that he found it impracticable to provide Quarters for all the

[1] Cf. the acute summary of Sergeant Lamb: "It is true that the Court of Massachusetts passed resolutions for procuring suitable accommodations for them; but from the general unwillingness of the people to administer the least civility, and from the feebleness of the authority which the American rulers had at that time over the property of their fellow citizens, their situation was rendered truly deplorable." *Journal of Occurrences in the American War*, 195.

[2] Mass. Archives, 216/29. — Engrossed copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 49. — *Journals of the House*, Nov. 27, 1777.

officers in the Houses in the town of Cambridge, that he was averse to taking up either of the Colledges for that purpose if it could be prevented, that he thought it might be avoided by Quartering some of the officers at Medford and Menotomy." The committee approved of this solution, "as less Inconvenience and Expense will arise than by taking up one of the Colledges." By a joint resolution of both chambers, therefore, the general was "desired to procure quarters for such officers as are not yet provided for, at Medford and Menotomy agreeable to the above report." [1]

Again Heath lost no time in trying to relieve the long-suffering officers, and to meet a situation that now contained a new element of discredit. On November 28 he reported to the Council:

I this Day received the Resolve of the Hon. Assembly for Extending the Limits of the officers and soldiers of the Convention and promising Quarters for them in Menotomy & Medford — I immediately sent up my Quarter Master With Directions, to ask the company & assistance of Mr. Hall one of the Tutors of the College with whom He would proceed to the before mentioned places and see what Houses can be possibly obtained. He is not returned but I fear the number will be few from the Intelligence I have received. From the supposed certain prospect which presented itself a few Days since, I ventured to give my Honor to the Officers that they should have proper Quarters within Eight Days from the 25th

[1] Mass. Archives, 216/29. — Engrossed copy in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 59. — "Court Records," xxxviii, 163. Menotomy was the present Arlington.

Instant, upon the pledge of which they have signed their paroles. If Quarters are not obtained I need not mention the disagreeable Situation which I shall be in.[1]

And now the Harvard Faculty, seeing the tide of attack begin to flow safely past the college into new channels, suddenly emerged from its shell and took its most insolent action of all. The regular long winter vacation was by this time drawing near, scheduled to begin the first Wednesday in December. On the previous Saturday, November 29, the "immediate governors" affected to recollect their instructions to dismiss the students "as soon as possible," and with a great show of alacrity resolved that

Whereas the Honble & Revd Overseers & Corporation have recommended to the immediate Governors of the College to dismiss the Students as soon as possible, after some matters of great Importance to the College should be adjusted, — therefore

Voted. — That all who can, or are desirous to go home this day, may have Leave by applying to a Tutor; & that the Remainder be dismissed next Monday Morning, to return on the first Wednesday in Feby next, unless they shall receive public Notice to the Contrary.

Voted. That if any Scholars should be detained in Town they shall acquaint a Tutor therewith; & if he give them Leave to tarry, upon returning their Names to the Steward, he be directed to make Provision for them till Wednesday next, & no longer, & charge it as sizings [i.e. extras].[2]

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[1] Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 60. This whole passage is struck across with the pen, and may not have been sent. It is to be noted that Heath records in his private journal, "Nov. 25. This day Genl Burgoyne &c signed their paroles." MS. at Mass. Hist. Soc.

[2] Faculty Records, iv, 78.

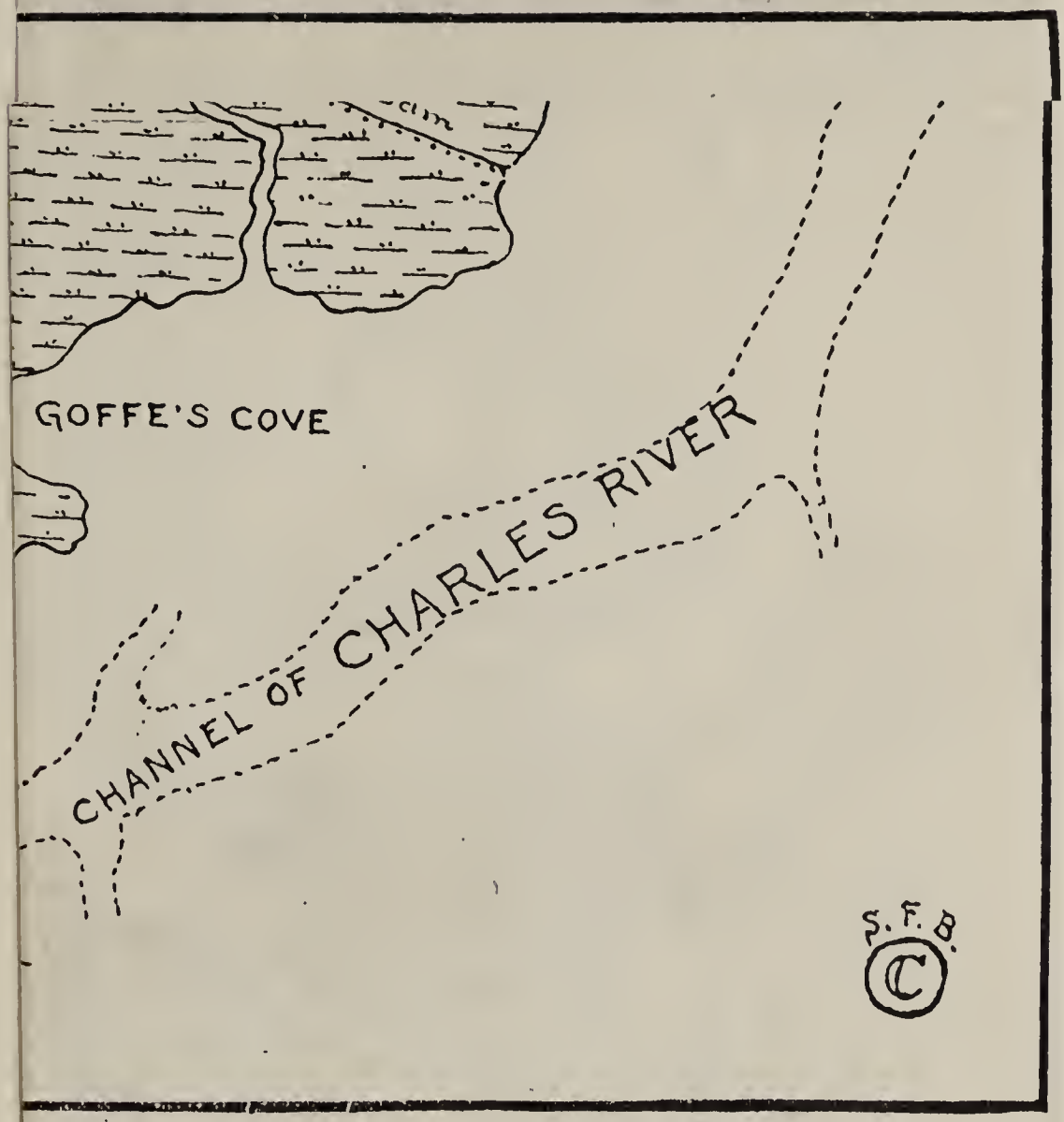
This slight anticipation of the vacation, now nothing but a piece of effrontery, might just as well have been made a few weeks earlier, when it would have saved the honor of the college, the town, and the state. That however seems to have been no concern of the Faculty. They had succeeded in distressing the unoffending officers, in incommoding both civil and military authorities, and in blocking the good intentions of the Overseers, to the utmost of their power; and their petty spite took a final triumphant fling in subsequently extending the vacation to the first Wednesday in March; so that while the unfortunate officers were scattered far and wide under every form of discomfort, the college halls that might have gathered them so conveniently remained totally vacant nearly all winter — perhaps the most ungracious spectacle ever presented in the College Yard.[1]

[1] Much of this episode has already been told by FitzHenry Smith, Jr., "Were Burgoyne's Officers Quartered on the College?" *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, xi, 50.

The success of the college authorities in forcing the officers to occupy private lodgings had an unexpectedly awkward sequel. The widely attended festival of Commencement, which had been discontinued since the beginning of the war, had to be omitted again in 1778, this time because of two grievous afflictions — a visitation of the smallpox and "the want of necessary Accommodations in the Town of Cambridge, the Houses being crowded with British Officers." Corporation vote of June 10, 1778. "College Book," viii, 2.

The Final Parole Limits

Having followed the complicated moves in this protracted game of dog-in-the-manger as played in Cambridge, it remains for us to accompany General Heath into the surrounding towns in the last stage of his endeavors to fulfil the Convention and assign proper quarters to the officers who had surrendered on the faith of its terms. A week was spent in ransacking the possibilities of Medford and Menotomy according to the order of the legislature. During this time Burgoyne, who had been watching the American's honest efforts with sympathetic appreciation, took a hand in lightening those labors as much as he could. Seeing that the houses of Cambridge were to be very nearly, and the halls of Harvard were to be absolutely, closed to his officers, so that their stay on Prospect Hill was to be more than an uncomfortable but temporary makeshift, he did his best to assuage their feelings by giving them a *raison d'être* and a professional status there. On Dec. 4 he issued orders that, to prevent desertions and preserve discipline, "as many Officers as can possibly be lodged in the Barracks without danger to their Health, or very unusual Inconvenience, must for the present constantly reside there." At the same time he could not forbear the satiric comment, "It is expected they will


GOFFE'S COVE
CHANNEL OF CHARLES RIVER
S. F. B.
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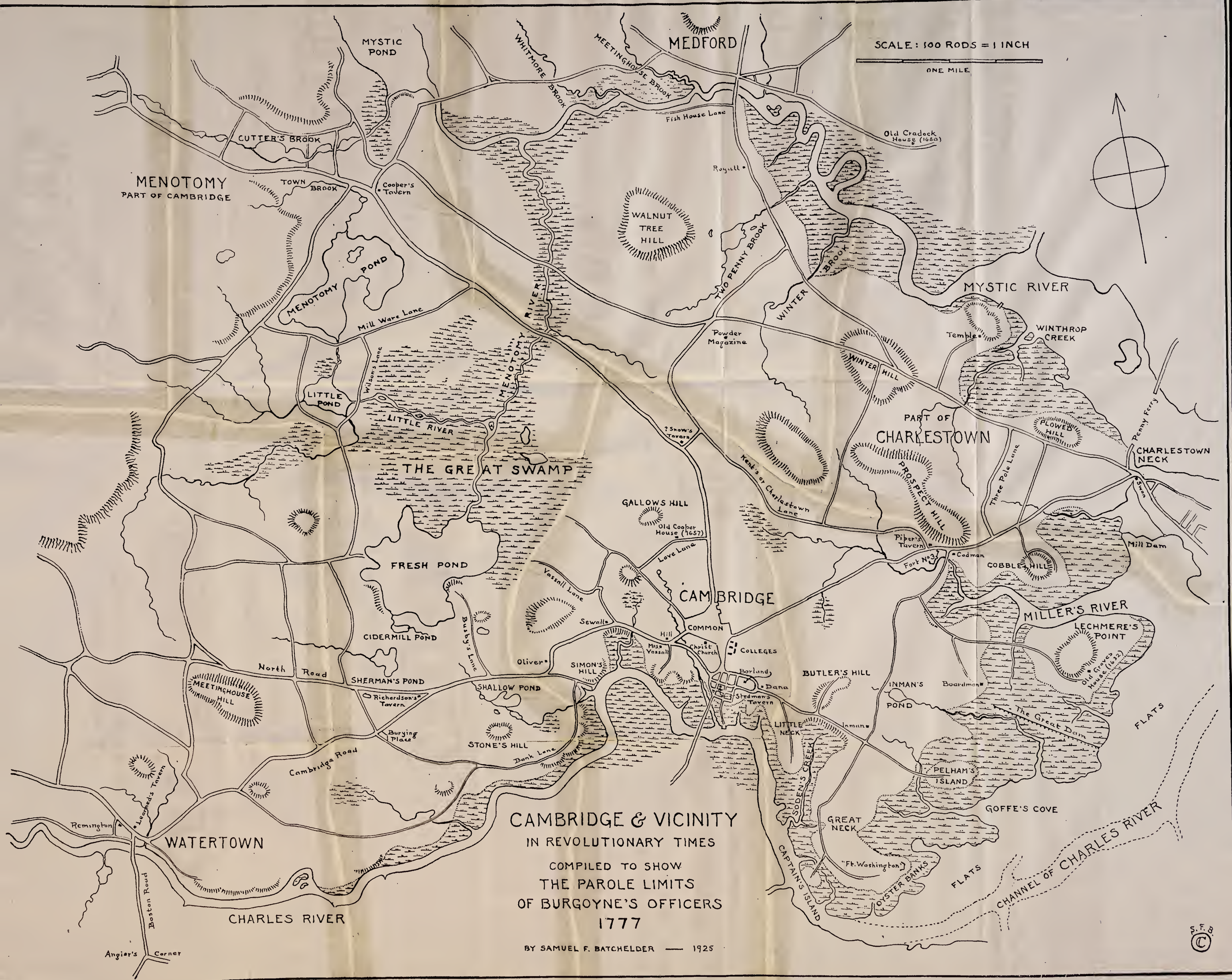
CAMBRIDGE & VICINITY
IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES
COMPILED TO SHOW
THE PAROLE LIMITS
OF BURGOYNE'S OFFICERS
1777
BY SAMUEL F. BATCHELDER — 1925
SCALE: 100 RODS = 1 INCH
ONE MILE
MEDFORD
MYSTIC POND
WHITMORE BROOK
MEETINGHOUSE BROOK
Fish House Lane
Old Cradock House (1680)
Royall
CUTTER'S BROOK
MENOTOMY
PART OF CAMBRIDGE
TOWN BROOK
Cooper's Tavern
WALNUT TREE HILL
TWO PENNY BROOK
WINTER BROOK
MYSTIC RIVER
MENOTOMY POND
Mill Ware Lane
MENOTOMY RIVER
Powder Magazine
Temple
WINTHROP CREEK
WINTER HILL
Wilson's Lane
LITTLE POND
LITTLE RIVER
THE GREAT SWAMP
? Snow's Tavern
PART OF CHARLESTOWN
PLOWED HILL
Penny Ferry
CHARLESTOWN NECK
Kent's or Charlestown Lane
PROSPECT HILL
Three Pole Lane
Swan
GALLOWS HILL
Old Cooper House (1657)
Piper's Tavern
Fort No. 3
Codman
Mill Dam
COBBLE HILL
FRESH POND
Vassall Lane
Love Lane
CAMBRIDGE
MILLER'S RIVER
LECHMERE'S POINT
Old Graves House (1632)
Sewall
COMMON
Hill
Miss Vassall
Christ Church
COLLEGES
CIDERMILL POND
Busby's Lane
Oliver
SIMON'S HILL
Borland
Dana
BUTLER'S HILL
INMAN'S POND
Boardman
North Road
SHERMAN'S POND
MEETINGHOUSE HILL
Richardson's Tavern
SHALLOW POND
Stedman's Tavern
LITTLE NECK
Inman
The Great Dam
FLATS
Burying Place
STONE'S HILL
Bank Lane
Cambridge Road
PELHAM'S ISLAND
SODEN'S CREEK
GOFFE'S COVE
Leached's Tavern
Remington
WATERTOWN
GREAT NECK
"Ft. Washington"
CAPTAIN'S ISLAND
OYSTER BANKS
FLATS
CHANNEL OF CHARLES RIVER
Boston Road
CHARLES RIVER
Angier's Corner
S.F.B.
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Not more than two or three rooms can be obtained at any rate on that road, and indeed how are Quarters to be expected from an extention to Fields and scattered Farm Houses? Your Honors are sensible that it is in large public Buildings, in populous Towns and Villages, that they are found. The subject of Quarters has been long debated — they are not as yet provided: *Every principle of Interest and policy call for our attention to the fulfilment of the Convention.* The probable short stay of the Troops still more engages it, as they will wish to catch at every pretext as an infringement, and will avail themselves of improving it to our disadvantage. If the Colleges are not to be taken, why should Watertown be refused where Quarters can be procured with ease? Can one material objection of disadvantage to the public be alledged against it, that upon one moment's reflection does not at present almost equally exist? *Public Faith, Honor & Interest compel me immediately to find proper Quarters,* I wish — I need, — I ask your Assistance that it may be compleated this day for reasons which I cannot mention; If I should not be so happy as to obtain your assistance to effect it, I hope that such measures as necessity may compel me to take will not be disagreeable.

I have the honor to be
with great respect
Your obed. Servt
W. Heath [1]

Such a frank statement of the dangers of the situation, and such an open threat of summary action, brought the legislature to its senses. On the same day they issued an order allowing Heath to take up quarters in private houses "with the permission of the owners" (an ominous clause), on the road to Watertown as far as Mr. Remington's dwelling, over the Watertown

[1] Dec. 12, 1777. Mass. Archives, 216/118. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 94.

bridge as far as Angier's Corner, and on the North Road in Watertown.[1]

The Watertown extension was the final addition to the parole limits, which, by the stages and for the causes traced above, had gradually expanded from the district immediately around the barracks to the whole vicinity of Cambridge. The completed parole (see Appendix) is dated Dec. 13, the day Heath assured Burgoyne that all officers unprovided for should have quarters in Watertown.[2] On the faith of this promise many officers signed.[3] Others (including apparently Burgoyne himself) had signed a fortnight before, when Heath felt so sure of getting Massachusetts Hall that he had given his word that all officers should be comfortably housed by the end of November.[4] A few, it may be added, in whom their treatment rankled most deeply, never signed at all.

But the incredible perversity of public opinion continued to block every move, and nullify every promise, of the American commander, who was now struggling

[1] *House Journals*, Dec. 12, 1777. — "Court Records," xxxviii, 197. — Mass. Archives, 216/118.

[2] See below.

[3] The well-informed editor of the *Annual Register* says the officers signed, not because they considered that their grievances were redressed, but mainly to do what they could "in order to remove this new difficulty" caused by Burgoyne's indiscreet letter of Nov. 14. *Annual Register* for 1778, p. 213.

[4] See p. 62 *ante*.

singlehanded against this really serious diplomatic crisis, and to spin out the wretched business to unimaginable lengths. The men of Watertown adopted the same obstructive policy as their brethren of Cambridge, and in an even bolder form. Again therefore the disgusted Heath unbosomed himself to the General Court in a burst of wrath that does him credit:

My Quarter Master went on yesterday to Watertown in order to take up Quarters for the Officers agreeable to the Resolve of both Houses of Assembly of the 12th Instant. Upon his arrival he was met by the Selectmen of the Town and Committee, who Informed him that they had been to the Owners of the several Houses which He had engaged, and had forbid them admitting any of the British Officers, and would still continue to forbid them until it was allowed by a Vote of the Town. —

As the foregoing needs no comment, I shall not make any. —

On Saturday [Dec. 13] I assured Gen[l] Burgoyne that his officers should have Quarters immediately in Watertown; I then immagined that I might give such assurance with safety — as I had the Resolve of both Houses before me for it. But if this is to be disputed by a COMMITTEE OF SELECTMEN of a TOWN I think it may justly be called a PHENOMANON in Government.[1]

The Roxbury man knew his audience. They might be callous as to the violation of the Convention, and indifferent as to the consequences thereof, but they were sensitive enough as to their own dignity. The very day that Heath made his report, they resolved that the selectmen and committee of Watertown be served with

[1] Dec. 15, 1777. Mass. Archives, 198/351. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 99.

an attested copy thereof, and directed to attend the Council on the 17th "and answer to the matters alleged against them." [1] This decisive action had the desired effect — if it had been taken with the Cambridge committee in the beginning, the whole controversy would never have occurred — and no further objection seems to have been made to quartering a considerable group of officers in Watertown.

For those that were still left unprovided with proper lodgings after this six weeks of confusion, nothing remained but the barracks; and there a number of them appear to have passed the winter, exposed to quite unnecessary, and very humiliating, hardships. Ensign Anburey records:

> We laboured under many distresses and difficulties; every species of provision was very dear, and to add to our misfortune, could hardly be procured for money. You do not, I believe, in England, rank milk in the catalogue of luxuries; yet we were obliged, *ourselves*, to traverse a deep snow for a full mile, to get a small quantity for our breakfasts, as our servants were not permitted to pass the centinels. . . . To preserve order and regularity among the troops, three officers of each regiment constantly reside in the barracks.[2]

Captain Cleve writes:

> I am lodged in the same miserable house with my Brigadier. My room is in the attic, and the cracks in the boarded walls are so large that you can see everything going on outside. I never felt so cold

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[1] "Court Records," xxxviii, 208.

[2] Letter of Nov. 30, 1777. *Travels through America*, ii, 60.

before in my life. I can't go a step from my fire-place, and the ink has frozen on my pen more than a hundred times. During the recent snow-storm, accompanied by a high wind, the snow was a foot deep in my room. The poor fellows in the barracks endure even greater hardships, for they have neither straw nor covering.[1]

To set this picture in its true colors, we must recall that the men to whom such treatment was meted out were not a crowd of dunderheaded subalterns, bottle-nosed majors, and superannuated garrison colonels (as British officers have been only too often represented by American writers), but the flower of the English fighting aristocracy, including scions of the peerage, sons of the great landed families, and men of wealth and fashion in the most exclusive clubs of London. The older among them had acquired wide experience, and won well-deserved honors, in various crack corps of the British army. The younger were keenly set on their profession, and had bright prospects of advancement: no less than thirty-three of them subsequently rose to the rank of general. Among the staff officers alone there were six members of Parliament. "It must be admitted," says the biographer who has most closely studied the personnel, "that rarely has so brilliant an array of British officers been marshalled under one commander." [2] Had these high-spirited and highly disciplined gentle-

[1] Letter of Dec. 18, 1777. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 376.

[2] Horatio Rogers, editor of *Hadden's Journal and Orderly Book*, p. xlvi.

men been forced to spend the winter among the savages in the wilderness, not a murmur would have escaped them. But to be treated like pariahs in the midst of a well-to-do and well-nurtured community of their own race,[1] in a town famous for its standards of religion and morality, was an insult which they could ill brook — nor can we wonder.

Thus were Burgoyne's officers finally quartered — a poor makeshift at the best of it. The consequences were both unfortunate and unforeseen. Although by the original intentions of all parties the stay of the Convention Troops in Cambridge was to be but brief, so that the lodging of the officers would have been only a temporary inconvenience, yet through the very fact that their quarters were so bad it fell out that they were forced to occupy them for almost a year. The reasons for this "vicious circle" are of extreme interest. But before we examine them we may glance at the daily life of the captives, especially those in the Vassall house mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

[1] "Rumor in many tongues, cries out a French War. Should it be so, I shall hope to join you in Fields where we have fought and conquer'd. There conquest becomes a gratification and the mind exults. Here pity interposes and we cannot forget that when we strike we wound a Brother." Phillips to Clinton. Cambridge, May 20, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 254.

Prison Life in Cambridge

Amidst all the inhospitable selfishness of the inhabitants of Cambridge that has been set forth above, the conduct of Captain Adams, ex-innkeeper of Charlestown and temporary possessor of the confiscated mansion of Col. Henry Vassall,[1] stands out in grateful relief. Perhaps as a stranger in town he did not share the bitter animosity shown by the old residents; perhaps he felt reminiscent prickings of his former legal duty to provide entertainment for man and beast; perhaps he realized from experience the golden harvest that awaited the sickle of a tactful and not too scrupulous Boniface. At all events, as we have seen,[2] his door was the first to open at the knock of the quartermaster; nor did he embarrass that functionary with provisos or restrictions.

Here, therefore, we may infer were immediately quartered as many and as important officers of the Convention Troops as the house would hold, comportable with their own punctilious ideas on questions of dignity and rank. Tradition has always run that they were members of Burgoyne's staff, or "general officers." The possibilities therefore include Charles Green and R. R. Wilford, aides de camp, R. Kingston, deputy adjutant general, Jonathan Clarke, commissary gen-

[1] See p. 188. [2] See p. 43 *ante*.

eral, George Vallancey, assistant quartermaster general, David Geddes, deputy paymaster general, Robert Hoakesly, wagonmaster general, together with such of the chaplains, surgeons, etc., as the fanciful reader may care to select from the useful list in the appendix to O'Callaghan's edition of *Burgoyne's Orderly Book*.

Certainly they were as diametrically opposite to the last military occupants — when the house had been used as a hospital for the Americans two years before — as can easily be conceived. Indeed for the average Yankee the idea of professional soldiers was inconceivable. Captain Cleve, one of the German prisoners, observed: "Since the guards here are militia regiments, and almost all officers in them are manual laborers, it has cost us much trouble to impart the idea that our officers had no handicrafts: they had believed that our officers did not follow their trades out of mere whim." [1] Equally baffling was the status of members of the nobility and gentry engaged in such a pursuit. "Well, if that be a lord," ejaculated a farmer's wife after a critical inspection of the bedraggled representative of the house of Napier, "if that be a lord I never desire to see any other lord but the Lord Jehovah!" [2]

[1] Letter of Dec. 18, 1777. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 378. In the same way Lafayette, on his triumphal progress through the country after the war, was everywhere greeted with the question, "What do you do for a living?"

[2] Letter of Nov. 25, 1777. Anburey, *Travels through America*, ii, 52.

In effect, the folk of Cambridge were sore perplexed how to deal with these strangers. Captain Cleve wrote on Nov. 15, 1777: "The existence we endure is a tragic compromise between that of free men and slaves. . . . The Americans themselves (who for policy's sake we no longer openly refer to as rebels) are often at a loss to know to which class we actually belong." Mrs. Professor Winthrop confided her doubts about the officers to her friend Mrs. Warren: "Some polite ones say we ought not to look on them as prisoners, — that they are persons of distinguished rank. Perhaps, too, we must not view them in the light of enemies. I fear this distinction will soon be lost." [1]

The distinction *was* lost despite the strenuous efforts of the Englishmen to preserve it — efforts which well illustrate the attitude of the Convention Troops during the whole period. "The American Congress," wrote Phillips (who succeeded Burgoyne) to Clinton, "as well as many others of the Americans, have industriously used the word *Prisoners* as explanatory of the situation of the Troops of the Convention. Lieutenant General Burgoyne always asserted the Contrary — that we were not Prisoners — I have ever both in sentiment and conduct done the same. . . . By the Treaty of Convention of Saratoga, we were to have a safe pass-

[1] Ellet, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 98.

age to Europe, and to march through the Country to the Port of Boston under the protection of the parties with whom the Treaty was formed and executed; we have Considered ourselves as passengers under the sanction and virtue of a Treaty, not as Prisoners." [1]

It is hardly necessary to point out the inconsistency of the Americans' position. They spoke of the troops as prisoners, but carefully kept the various units together, and allowed them to be paraded, inspected, and disciplined by their own officers, in a manner totally at variance with the usages of an ordinary prison camp. They spoke of the officers as prisoners, but permitted them to retain their swords and the command of their men, and forced them to quarter and subsist themselves as if in garrison. They talked of prisoners, referring to an intact army on its way home, and under temporary detention only. They bragged about their prisoners, while treating the entire force as a species of "paying guests." Military history has seldom recorded a more anomalous state of things.

A still further source of mystification to the Provincials, with their loose militia system, was the lifelong discipline and ingrained morale which enabled the officers, in spite of every effort to break their spirit by

[1] Cambridge, June 14, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 267.

insult, deprivation, extortion, and chicanery, to preserve their professional pride, and even "now and then to play the gentleman in the midst of our conquerors." The British, it is true, did so with but an ill grace, being chiefly occupied in keeping a stiff upper lip. "Poor Burgoyne & his brave Britons bear up against their fate — He dined [after the surrender] with Gates; not a word passed on the Event or Contest." [1] Their natural arrogance was intensified by the mortification of defeat by their former fellow-subjects; and they carried matters with a high hand, "talking at large with the self-importance of lords of the soil." [2]

A portion of that soil, according to tradition, they employed for the thoroughly British purpose of a race-course. The few horses they still possessed were probably barred, but plenty of money can change pockets on the result of a foot race. The track, it is said, ran from the old burying ground in Harvard Square up the road towards Menotomy (Massachusetts Avenue), through "Love Lane" (Linnaean Street), and down Garden Street to the starting point — a distance of nearly two miles.[3] Another thoroughly characteristic

[1] Wentworth to Eden. Paris, Dec. 18, 1777. Stevens, *Facsimiles*, etc., No. 317.

[2] Mrs. Winthrop to Mrs. Warren. February, 1778. Ellet, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 100.

[3] *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, 7.

light in which the Englishmen regarded the countryside was that of a game preserve. Scarcely, for example, had Brigadier-General Hamilton unpacked his trunks before he requested "permission of shooting within the Limits assigned the Officers,"[1] and the Germans followed suit.

On the other hand the Hessians, who as hired fighting men felt no personal animosity towards anyone, could afford to indulge their Continental suavity in a situation which to them was merely the fortune of war. "Clothed in blue cloaks" they promenaded the parole limits, greeting with "polite bows" the people of Cambridge,[2] which they voted "a friendly little place."[3] General Von Specht, upon asking for the privilege of fowling, was specifically complimented by Heath for "your civil and polite behavior since you have been at Cambridge";[4] and the following epistle is probably only a sample of many others:

Cambridge, May 14, 1778.

Sir.

Major Hopkins, Dept. Quar. Mast'r General, has informed me, that you intended doing me the Honor of a visit at Cambridge. Give me leave to assure you that I shall be very happy in seeing you

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[1] Cambridge, Nov. 21, 1777. Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 49.

[2] Mrs. Winthrop to Mrs. Warren. Nov. 11, 1777.

[3] *Ein kleiner, freundlicher Ort.* Eelking, *Deutsche Hülfstruppen*, i 335.

[4] Sept. 10, 1778. Heath, *Memoirs* (ed. 1901), 178.

at my House, and beg that you will favor me with your Company at dinner, on any Day which you will be so good as to fix.

I have the Honor to be with Esteem
Sir,
Your most obed't
humble Serv't
RIEDESEL.

The Hon'ble MAJ. GEN'L HEATH, Boston.[1]

With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. The Hessians had, on the whole, very considerate treatment. Madame Riedesel frequently speaks of the kindness of her guards. "We lived very happily and contented in Cambridge," says she, "and were therefore well pleased at the idea of remaining there during the captivity of our troops." [2] Her quarters were the social center for the German officers. There they gave dances[3] and suppers, made the perilous but successful experiment of a dinner on the king's birthday, and even held an illumination that aroused dire suspicions among their captors, who scented a horrid conspiracy in the smoke of their innocent candles. Their men amused themselves with an extraordinary collec-

[1] From the Emmet Collection, New York Public Library. — Quoted in *Hadden's Journal*, 353.

[2] *Letters and Journals* (ed. Stone), 143.

[3] The Germans were characteristically well supplied with music. Each regiment had its band, in some cases of considerable size. In the return for June 1, 1777, the Grenadier Battalion, for example, with 452 privates, had 20 musicians — and the 19 officers had 28 servants! Stone, *Memoirs of Riedesel*, i, 102.

tion of pets, from squirrels to bears, which they had accumulated on their marches — the only things, observes a chronicler, that they had been able to capture in America.[1]

The mercenaries indeed form the happiest and most fortunate group in our picture. They were living, as an eminent historian observes, in a sort of financial paradise. They had no desire to fight either for or against King George so long as they could draw his money. Without being harassed by drills, or fatigued by marches or exposed as a mark for bullets, they were earning four times the regimental pay that they would have received in their own fatherland; and those of them who practised handicrafts were permitted to go round the neighborhood, working for the exceptionally high wages which skilled labor commanded in the United States.[2]

The tedium of the winter nevertheless was nearly insupportable for British and Hessians alike, fresh from the activities of a campaign which among all its failings had certainly never lacked excitement. The one professional occupation that remained to the commanders was the care of their men. Although between officers and private soldiers there was then fixed a gulf the greatness of which is now incomprehensible, yet the former

[1] W. L. Stone, *Burgoyne's Campaign*, 254.
[2] Trevelyan, *American Revolution*, Part III, p. 206.

— eagerly following the noble example of their general — showed a solicitude for the latter that throws an odd gleam of paternal tenderness into that atmosphere of pipe-clay and the "cat." They constantly visited the wretched barracks and personally assisted in strengthening and weatherproofing them. They supplied the men with money under the pretence of buying the poor fellows' rags of old clothes and cast-off boots. They kept up regular drills, in which the surrendered arms were represented by stout sticks; and on holidays and accustomed anniversaries they turned out the whole motley crew for a pathetic parody of dress parade.

The lack of proper raiment, by the way, was one of the most obvious hardships suffered by the prisoners. The English regiments, by established usage, were clothed at the expense of their commanders, who by this time owed them two suits of uniform.[1] Plenty of warm things had been stored in Canada, and great efforts were made to get them sent forward; but much anxious correspondence (still on file) shows that as late as August, 1778, the "clothing ships" were still at Quebec; and the next month "all idea of receiving the baggage or clothing from Canada must be given up." [2] In consequence, the most grotesque devices had to

[1] Stone, *Memoir of Riedesel*, ii, 186.

[2] Phillips to Hamilton. Cambridge, Sept. 14, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 290.

be resorted to in order to escape actual nakedness. Riedesel mentions the ingenious expedient of cutting off the men's coat tails with which to repair what thus became their jackets.

The Germans were in like evil case. "The soldier has now worn his regimentals more than three years," lamented Cleve, "on shipboard, in the forests, and during a winter in barracks. The officers have taken out of Canada nothing but their most necessary and worst clothes, and sigh for new." [1] In September of 1778 General de Gall returned a list of "men who have had no clothing *for four years*." In spite of such handicaps, the officers did their best to keep up the morale by holding rigorous inspections, "and the old patched clothes were examined just as sharply as the spruce uniforms used to be at a grand-dueal parade in the home garrison." But with all these efforts for cleanliness, the Hessians were hopelessly dirty. "Such effluvia filled the air while they were passing," wrote Mrs. Winthrop on their first arrival, "that had they not been smoking all the time, I should have been apprehensive of being contaminated." [2]

However, "towards the end of January a transport arrived from New York with cloth breeches and some

[1] Letter of March 18, 1778. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 386.

[2] Ellett, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 97. — Cf. Stone, *Burgoyne's Campaign*, 254.

other necessities for the troops. The old regimentals had been hitherto scarcely made to hold together even with the most outrageous patches; so that the men were not a little heartened up at being able to appear more prosperous, as well as to better withstand the extraordinary cold of the winter."[1] For the New England climate was a revelation to these Europeans. "The Canadian winter is golden compared to this!" exclaims poor Cleve; while some unfortunates who had been interned at Rutland nicknamed the place "Siberia."

Thus passed a heavy year in the history of the old Vassall house. Never had it sheltered more hopeless hearts. Its occupants were strangers in a strange land, the remnants of an enormous and epochal failure, a prey to chagrin and half dead with ennui, waiting, ever waiting for the transports that never came and the exchanges that were never negotiated.

Moreover, they were shamelessly exploited by their greedy guards. The exorbitant house rent extorted from Burgoyne himself[2] was only one example of the tribute levied on the unwilling sojourners in Cambridge. Heath bewailed the fact that the Yankee traders were unable to resist "the bewitching allurements of gain and the expectation of catching hard money."[3] For the

[1] Eelking, *Deutschen Hülfstruppen*, i, 339. [2] See p. 25 *ante*.

[3] To the General Assembly. Headquarters, Boston, Dec. 5, 1777. Mass. Archives, 216/126.

strangers, it must be remembered, were paying for everything in gold, then considerably scarcer than diamonds. Farmers, householders, shopkeepers, craftsmen, soldiers, and politicians all joined the mad scramble to spoil these Egyptians. "Exaction is added to scarcity at Cambridge," wrote Burgoyne, "and every article of life is at an unprecedented price." [1] "All food and necessities were terribly dear, costing often four times more than at other nearby places. The guinea, which had been fixed by Congress at 28 shillings, was given in exchange for 90, in paper money. . . . This not insignificant profit went into the pocket of the Commissary and (it was whispered) of the Governor of Boston." [2] As to "everything which only remotely resembles luxuries, . . . it is unbelievable what profit the tradsemen in America make on their wares — double at the least. If I buy anything at fourth hand, i. e. at the fourth remove," complains Cleve, "I can figure that I have had to pay almost sixteen times more for it than it cost at first hand in Boston." [3]

What wonder that, heartsick and idle, the Englishmen fell back on the time-honored distractions of gar-

[1] To Howe. Rhode Island, Apr. 9, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. lxxviii.

[2] Eelking, *Deutschen Hülfstruppen*, i, 338. A paper dollar was then worth thirty cents.

[3] Letter of Dec. 30, 1777. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 379.

rison existence? "The British officers," declared Mrs. Winthrop, "live in the most luxurious manner possible, rioting on the fat of the land." [1] Loud complaints were raised at their revels — styled "a most enormous abuse" — in Bradish's tavern on Christmas, a festival unrecognized by their Puritan captors. [2] Not for nothing, we may suspect, did the staff include an "Assistant Commissary of Beer," and a "Deputy Assistant Commissary of Beer." Special stipulations, too, had been made in the original rules for the camp "that the officers should be supplied with liquors at the market price." Horrid traditions linger yet of the Britons' carousals in the great dining room of the Vassall house; though the legend that during a particularly lively evening they pricked a negro boy to death with their swords may probably be disposed of *via* the underground passage that was long reported to extend from the cellar to some mysterious destination.[3]

A favorite amusement of a milder type was tenpins, on which the Germans, in particular, gambled inordinately.[4] It is not unlikely that the practiced ingenuity

[1] To Mrs. Warren. February, 1778. Ellet, *Women of the Revolution*, i, 100.

[2] Heath, *Memoirs* (ed. 1901), 141.

[3] *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, 98. — Cambridge Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, x, 14, 73, *note*. The yarn doubtless originated in the lurid imagination of the old negro "Tony." It certainly hints, nevertheless, at the presence of some slaves still faithful to the place.

[4] Stone, *Memoir of Riedesel*, ii, 17.

of Captain Adams provided for his guests and their friends a form of dissipation then almost unheard of, and so scandalous as to be made the subject of a general order from Boston. On the information "that some of the Officers of the Convention have set up a billiard table in an house near the centre of the town of Cambridge, and that company is frequently there at very unseasonable hours, to the disquietude and uneasiness of the inhabitants. . . . All officers of the Convention are to be at their quarters, and not to be abroad after nine o'clock in the evening." [1]

In spite of this salutary rule, certain of the more adventurous spirits, making to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, indulged in unlawful nocturnal excursions under the guidance of such venal natives as were willing, for a due consideration, to "show them the town." In the middle of January Heath reported to the Council that three British officers had been smuggled into Boston the previous evening by "one [Jeremiah] Snow, a tavern keeper" of Cambridge. Nothing seems to have happened to the officers in consequence, but their hapless conductor was haled before the Council for a severe reprimand, in the mean time being actually cast into "the common gaol." [2]

[1] Jan. 28, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xii, Appendix, p. xlvii.

[2] Mass. Archives, 168/147 *et seq.* For Snow's tavern, cf. p. 12 *ante*.

Heading in the opposite direction, many officers foregathered at Richardson's tavern in Watertown, famous for its cockpit.[1] A deal of "chicken fighting" was indulged in here, and the neighborhood was scoured for good gamecocks. The reply of one poor old woman who was asked to sell a couple of promising birds shows that there was as much spirit in the human as in the feathered bipeds: "I swear now you shall have neither of them; I swear now I never saw anything so bloodthirsty as you Britonians be; if you can't be fighting and cutting other people's throats, you must be setting two harmless creatures to kill one another. Go along, go!"[2]

On the whole, then, we may agree in substance with the indignant Mrs. Warren, who declares: "This idle and dissipated army lay too long in the neighborhood of Boston for the advantage of either side. While there in durance, they disseminated their manners, they corrupted the students of Harvard College, and the youth of the capital and its environs, who were allured to enter into their gambling parties and other scenes of licentiousness."[3]

[1] This hostelry was at the junction of the present Mt. Auburn Street and Belmont Street. The cockpit is said to have been the curious semicircular depression close by, now better known to fame as the "Norsemen's amphitheatre."

[2] S. A. Drake, *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex*, 345.

[3] *History of the American Revolution*, ii, 45.

The efforts of the authorities to protect their young people from these demoralizing influences sometimes took a pretty stringent form. Captain Cleve notes in his diary letter:

> General Burgoyne, and also General Phillips, gave a ball to which they invited some ladies from Boston as well as from this neighborhood. Whereupon all the Committees issued a prohibitory order to the effect that no one was to be bold enough to appear there. So, of those invited, only two daughters of General Schuyler, one of whom is married to a Mr. Carter, dared disregard the prohibition on both occasions, and accept the invitation. Since General Schuyler had himself given General von Riedesel his daughters' address, the Boston Committee said nothing against their being present.[1]

Although the attempts of the British officers to "break into society" in Cambridge were thus sternly repressed, very little objection seems to have been made to the characteristic social instincts of the Germans, who, as already noted, were regarded with more favor. The dances and entertainments at Madame Riedesel's have been alluded to above; nor did the officers lack for partners. "There are quantities of pretty girls here," observes a gallant Brunswicker, "who on all questions of the war are wholly neutral, and govern themselves entirely by the *Jus Naturae*."

The more serious-minded betook themselves to reading, that blessed solace of all captives. A surprisingly

[1] Letter of Dec. 18, 1777. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 377.

modern note is sounded in their demand for newspapers, magazines, and books. Pigot wrote to Burgoyne from Newport that in answer to the latter's request he had sent all the old papers and pamphlets he could lay hands on.[1]

Death and Burial of Lieutenant Brown

So winter wore into spring, beguiled for the most part by the pleasures of the table, the dice, and the bottle. Burgoyne himself was permitted to return to England, suffering (appropriately enough) from gout in the stomach, and Phillips took his place. And now occurred a melancholy incident, destined again to link the name of Henry Vassall with this regrettable chapter of Cambridge history. Hospitable even in death, the Colonel, whose spirit (we may fancy) had welcomed the King's officers to his mansion, was now to share with one of them the narrow limits of his tomb.

On June 17, 1778, Richard Brown, second lieutenant of the Twenty-first Regiment of the Line, in a chaise with two young women from Boston, driving at a fast pace down Prospect Hill, was challenged by the Continental sentry at its foot. Apparently having some trouble with his horse, Brown made a gesture which the

[1] Jan. 13, 1778. Public Record Office, London; Colonial Office, Class 5, vol. 179, p. 349.

guard took for a threat or an insult, raised his musket, and shot the officer dead.

This tragic accident caused universal excitement. To the British at least it seemed the culmination of a long series of injuries and persecutions, some of which had already caused stormy courts-martial. General Phillips determined to make the funeral a public function. He bitterly informed Heath that "if the body of the murdered officer is to be allowed Christian burial, I would wish to deposit it in the vault appropriated for strangers, in the Protestant church at Cambridge." (The Vassall tomb being the only one beneath Christ Church, the reference is unmistakable, in spite of the slip in the description.) To this Heath, who was greatly concerned at the *contretemps*, immediately consented, and added, "I have also given orders that decency be exhibited by our troops during the time of procession of interment . . . and from the universal respectful behaviour of the people of this country on such occasions, you may be sure that not the least insult will be offered." [1] Despite his confident words, he was not above taking precautions on that score. "The funeral party was joined by the German officers and by several important Americans," says Eelking; "but we could not determine whether the latter really wished to show their sympathy

[1] Heath, *Memoirs* (ed. 1901), 156, 157.

or whether their presence was to restrain the exasperated mob, since it was feared the latter might disturb the solemnities." [1]

The event proved that the American commander had put too much confidence in the self-control of the Cantabrigians; irritated out of all bounds of academic courtesy. "The remains of poor Brown," wrote one of his fellows, "were interred in the church at Cambridge; all the officers at Cambridge and the environs attended—a most mournful sight! . . . I cannot pass over the littleness of mind, and the pitiful resentment of the Americans, in a very trifling circumstance; during the time the service was performing over the body, the Americans seized the opportunity of the church being open, which had been shut since the commencement of hostilities, to plunder, ransack and deface every thing they could lay their hands on, destroying the pulpit, reading-desk and communion-table, and ascending the organ-loft, destroyed the bellows and broke all the pipes of a very handsome instrument." [2] This impious desecration must have occurred after the service in the body of the church was over, and the *cortège* had retired to the tomb in the cellar for the actual interment. Phillips's

[1] Eelking, *Deutschen Hülfstruppen*, i, 349.

[2] Anburey, *Travels through America*, ii, 233. The organ had been presented in 1764 by Barlow Trecothick, Lord Mayor of London.

original request was that the funeral should take place "on the evening" of the 19th, probably meaning at sunset, a common time for such ceremonies. Thus the dastardly work of the populace was done, suitably enough, under cover of darkness.

This miserable exhibition of spite by the inhabitants of Cambridge was but one of the numerous unhappy circumstances which seemed to conspire to make the ill-starred affair as notorious as possible. "The centinel who shot him," adds Anburey, "was a little boy scarce fourteen" — an interesting commentary on the make-up of the Continental militia at that stage of the war.[1] Immediately after his act, "the prisoners who were near, seized the sentry and dragged him by the heels up the hill, which tore his face considerably, and otherwise much abused him, before he was released by the picquet. The Adjutant of the same regiment, on hearing the affair, and being on horseback, set off furiously, and just before he got to the place, his horse stumbling pitched him off, and broke his collar bone." [2] General Phillips, for his insolent letters to Heath on the matter, was confined to his house for the rest of his stay in town,

[1] Heath very early complained of the difficulties he should encounter because "by the drafted Men's hiring others to do their duty a number of Lads and old Men will be returned" in the regiments called out to act as guards. To Council. Nov. 4, 1777. Mass. Archives, 198/274.

[2] Almon, *Remembrancer*, vi, 346.

a proceeding of which Congress officially approved July 7, 1778. Meantime the unfortunate sentry was court-martialed and acquitted, in spite of the bitterest protests from all the ranking British officers.

By another of fortune's ironies therefore Henry Vassall, who, as chairman of the building committee, had done so much to secure the beautiful furnishings of Christ Church, became the underlying cause of their fanatical demolition.[1]

Burgoyne's Fatal Letter

The reader who has perused the foregoing pages has seen how the article of the Convention regarding quarters, reasonable and easy as it first seemed, was converted by the venomous meanness of the Cambridge folk into a formidable stumbling-block and rock of offence. The treatment of the officers, from the lieutenant-general to the youngest ensign, was not only a breach of the letter of the Convention, but was a gross violation of the spirit and intent breathed in every line

[1] There seems no doubt whatever that Brown lies today in the Vassall tomb. Baron Riedesel speaks of him as being "buried with all military honors and entombed in the church at Cambridge," where the Colonel's vault, as already stated, is the only one that ever existed. Phillips's reference to it as appropriated to strangers was evidently due to imperfect information, or to the hurry and excitement of the moment. When the vault was last examined, a coffin was found containing the bones of an unidentified man over forty-five years of age, the lower limbs covered thickly with hay, indicating transportation. See Cambridge Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, x, 78.

of that document, as well as of the protocol which preceded it and the parole which followed it — the intent that since the officers were not only soldiers but gentlemen they were to be used as such. And that they were properly cared for the Americans never even pretended: the most prejudiced partizans of the patriot cause, such as the Congressional committee, could do no more than make excuses. With the possible exception of the Harvard Corporation, everyone tacitly or openly admitted the truth.

In other words, when Burgoyne wrote to Gates that *as long as* things continued as they then were, "the public faith was broke," [1] he was but putting into plain language what all parties had been unmistakably hinting at from the beginning (as shown in the passages italicized in the foregoing quotations), and what Heath continued to harp on until the very end. He was stating a fact.

Also let it be observed that the unhappy phrase occurred in a letter to the officer who had drawn up and signed the Convention, and who would naturally have a prime interest in knowing how it was being observed — to the officer, moreover, who had treated the writer with every courtesy and entertained him honorably at his own table. The letter, in short, was in the nature of

[1] See *ante*, p. 25.

a confidential communication between friends, not of an official protest. If *that* were intended, Gates, who had nothing to do whatever with the management of the prisoners, was certainly not the man to address. Burgoyne himself considered the letter so informal that he did not even keep a copy of it.[1]

The correctness of this view is corroborated by the circumstance that Burgoyne did prepare an official protest, very properly addressed to the highest military authority, and with the sanction (or at any rate the knowledge) of Heath himself. The latter, however, for his own reputation and for the good name of Massachusetts, begged the indignant Englishman to delay action in despatching it. "General Burgoyne," he informed the Council on Nov. 18, "the last Saturday [Nov. 15] demanded a passport for an officer to proceed to His Excellency General Washington and to Congress to represent to them that the Convention was broken as to Quarters. I granted his request, but desired him to defer sending until this day, by which time I was in hopes proper Quarters would be provided. He will I suppose this afternoon pursue his Resolution of sending his Express."[2] Nevertheless, Heath seems to have

[1] *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 211.

[2] Mass. Archives, 198/296. — Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 44.

managed to appease the commander with fresh promises (which were again nullified by the imbecility of the Cantabrigians), so that the protest was never sent. Instead, he himself wrote to Washington as soon as he had got Burgoyne safely housed, alluding guardedly to the situation and putting as good a face upon it as he could. "We are not a little Embarrassed in obtaining Quarters for the officers, who frequently inform us that they are to be Quartered according to rank.— General Burgoyne is in Mr. Borland's House Formerly General Putnam's Quarters, and the other principal officers in the Town of Cambridge." [1] This was as much as he could creditably say; as to the junior officers he made no specifications whatever.

Such, then, was the essentially personal nature of Burgoyne's remark to Gates. But Gates, who was at heart a sneak, soon took the opportunity of currying favor by communicating the letter to Congress. And before we can understand its effect there we must appreciate the temper that body was in when it arrived.

For the little group of jobbers and politicians at Philadelphia who at this date unfortunately constituted the only central authority of the new government were frothing at the mouth, so to speak, over the whole business of the Saratoga Convention. None realized

[1] Nov. 21, 1777. Draft in Mass. Hist. Soc., Heath MSS., vii, 54.

more bitterly than they that although Burgoyne, by the inconceivable incompetence of his superiors at home, had been marched into a death trap where it was a perfectly simple matter to dispose of him once and for all, yet by his own firmness and spirit, and by the weakness of Gates, he had managed to emerge from that trap not only with most of his officers and men intact but with the astonishing guarantee that they should all be transported safe home to England. And although he guaranteed on his side that none of them should again take part in the war, yet since as soon as they got home they would release an equal number of effectives from garrison duty to be placed in the American field, Gates's whole campaign, so far as the prime object of reducing the enemy's man power went, was patently a flat failure.

The whole effort of Congress therefore was bent upon some method of invalidating the Convention which had produced such a fiasco. As Trevelyan [1] points out, there were two ways of doing this. By the first, the legislators, as the supreme power of the state, might have repudiated the whole treaty as contrary to public interest, throwing over Gates and declaring he had no right to make such a preposterous promise. But Gates was their spoiled darling, and rather than repudiate him they would gladly have repudiated Washington himself

[1] *American Revolution*, Part III, p. 203.

— as they several times came very near to doing. They preferred therefore the second and ignobler way, to lie in wait like a parcel of pettifogging lawyers and watch their chance to pick some flaw in the performance of the contract whereby they might declare it had been violated and need no longer be observed. But so far it had been extremely hard for them to show a breach on the Englishmen's side. They were trying to make something out of the circumstance that the prisoners had not surrendered their side arms, or furnished descriptive lists of the rank and file — neither of which had been required by the Convention — when blind chance, that favors the knave quite as often as the just man, suddenly put into their hands the very excuse they were looking for.

Pouncing upon Burgoyne's phrase, stripping it of every qualifying clause, and ignoring the fact that it was a private protest against the conduct of their own side, they gleefully drew the monstrous inference that the British commander had publicly announced he should no longer consider himself bound by the compact.[1] That document, in consequence, they announced

[1] "It is a strong indication of his intentions, and affords just grounds of fear, that he will avail himself of such pretended breach of the convention, in order to disengage himself and the army under him, of the obligation they are under to these United States, and that the security which these states have had in his personal honour is hereby destroyed." From the vote of Congress, Jan. 8, 1778.

that they should in turn disregard on their side, particularly the promise (the backbone of the whole) to allow the troops to return to England.[1]

The politicians' point was gained. In vain Burgoyne protested that he meant nothing of the kind, that he was only entering an objection, in hopes "to see the complaint redressed." In vain he pointed out that he and his officers, by signing the parole *after* the date of his ill-starred letter to Gates, showed that they still considered the Convention as binding.[2] Their behavior, too, upon receipt of the news from Philadelphia, was obvious evidence to the same effect. They were completely taken aback by this unexpected collapse of all their anticipations, and could not conceal their anxiety as to their fate. "General Burgoyne and his officers," reported Heath, "appear much disappointed, and exhibit an appearance rather of concern and uneasiness than of sulkiness or resentment, and endeavour to palliate their former expressions and conduct."[3] But all

[1] "Our situation daily grows worse. . . . The Americans are declaring openly even now that they should not be bound by the terms of the Convention. They would like to saddle the whole thing on us, but in a manner most unfair — as though *we* had violated the terms." Letter of Capt. Cleve, Feb. 5, 1778. Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, iv, 384.

[2] Burgoyne to President of Congress. Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1778. *Parliamentary Register*, xi, 211, 212. See note, p. 67 *ante*.

[3] To President of Congress. Boston, Feb. 7, 1778. Trevelyan, *American Revolution*, Part III, p. 205, *note*.

would not answer. An unconsidered word had undone everything that the Briton's resolute diplomacy had gained; and from that time forward (thanks to the churlishness of the Cambridge men) the Convention of Saratoga, for its intended purposes, ceased to exist.

A new problem, however, now preyed on the congressional mind. By virtue of the unusual stipulations of the Convention, the troops which had surrendered to Gates were not to be regarded as ordinary prisoners of war to be maintained at public expense, but as travellers bound for England, and hence, like all travellers, paying their own way. To declare the compact utterly at an end, therefore, would not only cut off the precious stream of gold that they were dispensing in a country almost ruined by depreciated paper, but would also force the Americans to the enormous cost of subsisting, like any other prisoners, their entire army. Burgoyne's whole force would be turned from a valuable asset into a heavy liability. Hence, to postpone killing the goose that laid such golden eggs, the unscrupulous schemers at Philadelphia hit on the plan of declaring the Convention not absolutely void, but "suspended" until "a distinct and explicit ratification" of its terms "shall be properly notified by the Court of Great Britain to Congress." (The ratification, it will be noticed, was to be all on one side!) The treaty in short was not to be

really binding, but only just binding enough to give the patriots its benefits without its responsibilities.

The phraseology of this vote, passed January 8, 1778, showed an ingenuity worthy of Machiavelli himself. For it was obvious that the British government could not negotiate directly with Congress without virtually recognizing the insurgents as an independent nation.[1] Yet so besotted were the plotters that no sooner had they passed their resolve than they were seized with panic lest a ratification might somehow actually take place. In that case there would be nothing for it but to allow these doubly valuable troops to go home after all, to the military profit of England and the financial loss of America. They therefore not only took good care not to notify Downing Street of their action, but even tried to prevent definite word of it from leaking out at all. "Good policy," wrote the president of Congress to Heath on Jan. 14, 1778, "dictates that we should keep the Court of Great Britain from a knowledge founded on authentick accounts of the Act of Congress of the 8th as long as we can fairly do so." [2] They thus put themselves in the preposterous position of one who makes a demand on his adversary and at the same time endeavors to keep him in ignorance of it — of an intrepid

[1] Phillips at first refused to pay bills rendered in the name of "The United States of America."

[2] Heath Letters. MSS. Library of Congress.

David defying his Goliath in a whisper carefully calculated not to reach him.

Acting on this honorable and dignified principle they actually kept the news from Heath himself for almost a month; [1] and following their instructions the American general was obliged to refuse Burgoyne "the liberty of sending it to Gen[l] Howe till I had certified Congress I had delivered it to himself." [2] But from such a nightmare of inconsistency they were soon awakened. The enterprising printer of the *Boston Gazette* scored a magnificent "scoop" by getting hold of the whole proceedings, and publishing them (much to Heath's mortification) as the "front page feature" in his issue of Feb. 16 — an early instance of "shirtsleeves diplomacy" in the American press.

The politicians might have spared themselves their trepidation as to a possible ratification of the Convention of Saratoga. That extraordinary suggestion, at length circuitously received by the home government,

[1] "1778, Feb. 3. This Day received per Express [!] a resolve of Congress directing that the Embarkation of Gen[l] Burgoyne & his Troops be deferred untill the Court of Great Britain shall ratify the Convention." Heath's MS. Journal, Mass. Hist. Soc.

[2] Heath to Laurens, Feb. 19, 1778. Heath Letters, *ubi supra*. So long and so successfully was the news concealed from the British headquarters at Newport, that Burgoyne had the exquisite disappointment of hearing, *two months* after the action of Congress, that the transports had actually arrived in Massachusetts Bay, and an officer had come ashore to ask where the troops were to embark!

was of course officially ignored. The English commanders, more astute in such matters than the Yankees, foresaw the result from the first. "General Burgoyne and his officers," wrote Heath to Laurens on Feb. 19, 1778, "express themselves with much modesty under their detention; But General Phillips observed to me the day before yesterday that Great Britain would never ratify the Convention; That as it was made between General Gates and General Burgoyne, and neither the United States nor Great Britain mentioned, the Ministry would have nothing to do with it."

Nevertheless, short of committing such a capital error in diplomacy as would have been involved by formal ratification, Downing Street did everything it could to comply with the terms of Congress and get the captives home again. The royal commissioners on conciliation, sent over in the summer of that year, offered a ratification signed by themselves; but Congress quite naturally, though rather intricately, resolved "that no ratification which may be tendered in consequence of powers which only reach that case by construction and implication, or which may subject whatever is transacted relative to it to the future approbation or disapprobation of the parliament of Great Britain, can be accepted by Congress." [1]

[1] *Journals*, Sept. 4, 1778.

On the failure of such civilian advances, a strictly military method of approach was tried. Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander in chief, wrote to Washington, offering "by express and recent Authority from the King, received since the Date of the late Requisition made by His Majesty's Commissioners, to renew in his Majesty's Name all the Conditions stipulated by Lieut. General Burgoyne in Respect to the Troops serving under his Command." [1] This proposal, duly transmitted by Washington, came so alarmingly near fulfilling the original terms that the congressional ranks were thrown into consternation. Unable in their agitation to formulate any properly diplomatic reply, they fell back on mere bluster, and with incredible boorishness informed Clinton "that the Congress makes no answer to insolent letters," [2] or in brief told him to shut up. Having thus unmistakably shown their hand, the politicians might well flatter themselves that in the date of ratification they had devised an ingenious substitute for the Greek calends.

[1] New York, Sept. 19, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 298.

[2] Secretary Thompson to Clinton. Philadelphia, Sept. 28, 1778. Stevens's *Facsimiles*. etc., No. 1168.

Why the Prisoners Left Cambridge

We have seen that long before this time the Americans had come to look upon the Convention Troops as a standing source of cash — a sort of private mint. Early in January, to be sure, when Heath, having advanced his last dollar in feeding and warming his prisoners, had called on Burgoyne for a payment on account,[1] the Englishman had proffered him the depreciated Continental bills, suavely observing that an American would hardly refuse his own currency! Heath however had been able to point to a resolve of Congress that all debts of the troops should be discharged in provisions or coin. Burgoyne had been a good deal disconcerted by this.[2] While willing to replace some of the beef and flour, if practicable, from the British headquarters at Newport, "he cannot yet well digest the payment in solid coin, alledging that every hard dollar will fetch him three of paper currency," as Heath reported to Laurens. Nevertheless, after correspondence with Howe and his pay-

[1] Though Heath was desperately short of cash, he was too shrewd to admit his total poverty to Burgoyne, merely stating that the appropriation *for the Convention Troops* was temporarily exhausted. Heath to Laurens, Jan. 6, 1778.

[2] Clarke, his commissary, had so far lost his temper as to declare "that demanding hard money was so extraordinary that he imagined Great Britain would not hesitate at paying £30,000 stg. to publish such a proceeding to the World." Same to same, Jan. 18, 1778. Heath Letters, MSS. Library of Congress.

master Pigot, Burgoyne had yielded the point, and the rebels had the gratification of receiving almost unlimited specie payments.

Their satisfaction might have been less had they known the Englishmen's motives, based on economic laws which their adversaries understood much better than they did. For the British commanders realized that every additional golden sovereign they put into circulation depreciated still further the value of the ceaseless emissions of Yankee paper dollars. As Pigot put it, "It would be better to pay hard Money when you conveniently can than send Provisions to Boston, for that will be immediately carted away to General Washington's Army, who stand in great Need of Salt Provisions, whereas the hard Money coming amongst them depreciates greatly their Paper." [1] Heath, with his characteristic sound sense, soon detected and protested against this financial stratagem, the Massachusetts Council early tried to block it, and Washington was sadly perturbed at it; but the fatuous congressmen had no inkling of the economics of the situation, and the more hard money that came their way the better they were pleased.[2]

[1] Pigot to Howe. Newport, Apr. 10, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 229.

[2] Fiske, *American Revolution*, i, 341.

From another point of view, too, this payment in coin proved more of a hindrance than a help to the Americans. Everybody wanted it at once. By the resolve of Congress, all specie received by Heath was to be "immediately transmitted to the Treasury." But as Heath bluntly enquired, what good did that do him? If the money was to go elsewhere, how was he to continue to subsist the prisoners? They were costing him $20,000 a week for food and fuel alone. His own supply of paper currency was exhausted. He had borrowed every dollar he could find in private hands. Finally he was forced to appeal to the Massachusetts Assembly for help, although fully aware of the impolitic nature of such a transaction. His letters to Congress during this period are full of the annoyance and perplexity he suffered from that body's greedy determination to get the coveted gold into its own hands.

Nevertheless, the gold was paid, and paid in incredible amounts. When Burgoyne, sick in body and in heart, was permitted to sail from Newport for home, in April, 1778, a general settlement of accounts to that date was made a condition precedent to his departure; and the enormous sum of twenty-seven thousand pounds "in solid coin" (equivalent to three hundred thousand dollars of the depreciated paper) was counted out in a single transaction to the Continental commissary. At

the same time, twenty thousand pounds more was supplied the British paymaster for further expenses of the prisoners.[1] And this too vanished like dew before the sun.

On, therefore, for the whole weary summer went the exorbitant charges, and on went the protesting payments, in the desperate hope that the Convention would yet be somehow acknowledged and fulfilled. Clinton, having succeeded Howe as British commander in chief, continued to drain his military chest to supply the needs of his captive brothers in arms so impatiently tarrying at Cambridge. At length confidence began to weaken. "Should the ratification of the Convention so eagerly awaited be prevented," confessed Phillips to Clinton on August 27, "precautions should be taken for the convenience and safety of the men." [2] Finally it be-

[1] Pigot to Howe. Newport, April 10, 1778. *Report on American MSS.*, i, 229. These payments, added to the £10,000 liquidated by Phillips (see p. 110 *post*), amount to £57,000 stg. Assuming that there were other payments I have not traced, and counting in the sums extorted directly from the officers at Cambridge, the grand total was probably considerably larger.

What the rebels did with all this ill-gotten store of precious metal is something of a mystery. Undoubtedly the greater part, following the invariable rule when specie is at a premium, was immediately "hoarded" and withdrawn from circulation. Certainly very little of it seems to have reached the Treasury. At least, for the year 1778 Congress admitted spending but $78,666 (about £7,000) in gold and silver received *from all sources*, as against the gigantic figure of over $62,000,000 in bills. Most of these specie payments were used in transactions with the enemy (where paper was of course useless), such as pay and expense money for spies, relief for American prisoners, etc. See Bolles, *Financial History of the U. S. from 1774 to 1789*, p. 69.

[2] *Report on American MSS.*, i, 283.

came plain that the public faith was indeed broken — by Congress — that the prisoners were to remain prisoners indefinitely, and that nothing was to be gained by keeping up the fiction that they were paying their own way as passengers bound for England.

Realizing, then, that hope was at an end, especially after the insulting reply he had received from Congress,[1] Clinton changed his policy, and declined to be bled any longer. He ceased his remittances of gold to Cambridge. He also declined to furnish provisions, throwing the burden of subsisting their prisoners upon the Americans, to whom it now evidently belonged. The Convention Troops therefore could no longer look to their friends either for food or for money with which to buy it and the other necessaries of life. The officers began to find their pockets growing empty. By the anniversary of the Convention the financial crisis was acute. "I declare to you," wrote Phillips to Prescott on November 1, "that there is not Fifty Pounds among all the Troops under my Command."[2] Credit had consequently been strained to the breaking point. As one of the officers exclaimed, "We are all drowned in debt to the inhabitants."

This was indeed a turn in the tide of affairs. Bur-

[1] See p. 103 *ante*.

[2] Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 331.

goyne's army, so to speak, had ceased to pay dividends. The politicians had overreached themselves. Had they been clever enough to temporize with Clinton's offer they might have continued for months to jingle fresh British gold in their pockets, but now the fat was in the fire with a vengeance. The Convention Troops were assuming the unwelcome status of ordinary prisoners in fact as well as in name, and something must be done about it. Indeed the approach of such an eventuality had been foreseen for some time, and during the summer one or two of the regiments had been hustled out to Rutland, Mass., on the excuse that they would be safer there, but really because it cost less to maintain them in the back country. The same procedure, and for the same reasons (true and pretended), was now decided upon for the whole force, but in a far more aggravated form.[1] On Oct. 15 Congress resolved that the entire body of Convention Troops should be marched seven hundred miles southward to the little hamlet of Charlottesville, Virginia, the cheapest, *warmest*, and most inaccessible habitat that could be found for them.

To the officers in particular this was a heavy blow. They had absolutely no ready money for the expenses

[1] This step was hastened by the arrival of the French fleet in the beginning of September, for a long stay at Boston, thereby increasing the population (according to some estimates) by nearly 9,000, and causing a sharp advance in the already high cost of food, fuel, etc.

of the march; in fact it seemed doubtful whether many of them would be allowed to march at all. For with the news of their intended departure the Cantabrigians, to whom they owed staggering sums, suddenly manifested a most uncomfortable solicitude for the safety of their persons. "Numbers of the officers have been arrested for the hire of their lodgings and other expenses," observed Phillips.[1] To add to their humiliations, the indignity of a fresh parole was forced upon them. Yet their soldierly spirit remained unbroken. "I sincerely wish it was in my power," reported Major Forster to Phillips, "to assist those Gentlemen, but that is out of my power, as I have only Five Guineas left, and in course if money does not arrive we shall be obliged to live on our Rations, and fare as our Fellow Soldiers, but this we shall not repine at." [2]

In the end, the pecuniary problem was solved by Phillips becoming personally responsible for the debts of his officers to the extent of £10,000, and by his remaining in Cambridge "in pawn," as he expressed it, until that amount could be forwarded to him by Clinton.

While the commanding officer thus continued at his quarters in the Borland house till the middle of December, the rest of the army set out for the southward in

[1] To Clinton. Cambridge, Nov. 15, 1778. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Report on American MSS.*, i, 346.

[2] Rutland, Nov. 3, 1778. Idem, i, 334.

detachments during the second week of November, exactly one year from the time they had arrived in town. Our civic history is not concerned with the further misadventures and the gradual disintegration of that force, which had set forth so gallantly on one of the most promising and strategically perfect campaigns of the war. But we may well ask ourselves whether the course of the Revolution would not have been altered, and whether our national honor would not have been spared a dark blot, had Burgoyne and his officers received decent and humanitarian treatment in Cambridge.

APPENDIX

Parole Signed by the Convention Troops

[From the original at the Boston Public Library]

We whose Names are hereunto subscribed being under the restrictions of the Convention made on the sixteenth of October last between Lieutenant General Burgoyne and Major General Gates do promise and engage on our Word & Honor and on the Faith of Gentlemen to remain in the Quarters assigned us for our Residence in Cambridge, Watertown, Medford and Charlestown in the State of Massachusetts Bay, and at no time to exceed or pass the following Limits viz. Swans Shop at Charlestown neck, the Cambridge road up to the Cross way between Mr. Codmans House & Fort No. 3. the said cross way out to the road by Mr. Inmans House taking in the Hospital Barracks, from thence a strait line to Cambridge Bridge, from thence the north brink of Charles river to Watertown Bridge, from thence the Boston road as far as the crotch of the way at Angers Corner, from Watertown Bridge up the road to the Northwest Corner of Mr. Remingtons House, and from Learneds Tavern the Cambridge road, on to the Common to the Menotomy road, up said road to Cooper Tavern taking in the Menotomy pond, but not to pass the Beach on the South, West, or north sides thereof, from Coopers Tavern down to the east end of Benjn Tufts House in Medford, and from Medford Bridge the Boston road to Swans Shop the first mentioned bounds. the intermediate roads are within the Parole, and the back yards of the respective Quarters to the distance of Eighty yards from them, during our continuance in this State, or until the Continental General Commanding in this State, His Excellency General Washington, or the Congress of the United States shall order otherwise; and that we will not directly or indirectly give any intelligence whatever to the Enemies of the United States, or do, or say anything in opposition to or in prejudice of the measures and proceedings of any Congress for the said States during our

continuance here as aforesaid, or until we are duly exchanged or discharged; and that we will at all times duly obey and observe the Rules and Regulations already Established for the Government of the Troops in Quarters —

Given under our Hands at Cambridge in the State of Massachusetts Bay this Thirteenth Day of December, In the Year of Our LORD, 1777 —

II

COLONEL HENRY VASSALL[1]

THE Cambridge Loyalists or "Tories" have suffered a somewhat undeserved neglect at the hands of our historians. Numerous, opulent, cultivated, picturesque, and exceedingly interesting in themselves, they also form the outstanding figures in the village annals during the middle of the eighteenth century — annals which otherwise would be colorless to the vanishing-point. Economically they contributed vastly to the reputation and resources of the town, whole sections of which were opened up and brought to a high state of development by their wealth, intelligence, and taste. Politically they were the conscientious upholders of that realm of law and order against which their fellow countrymen saw fit to revolt, with results that long hung in the balance and that — had it not been for the unexpected folly of their leaders and the equally unexpected rise of a first-

[1] This study is an amplification of a brief paper read at the meeting of the Cambridge Historical Society on January 26, 1915, in the house of Major John Vassall (recently occupied by Miss Alice Mary Longfellow) when the portraits here reproduced were first shown.

For these reproductions the author is indebted to the generous kindness of Richard Henry Dana, Esq., the purchaser of the originals. He has since presented the latter to the Massachusetts Historical Society, under certain conditions for their transfer to the Cambridge Historical Society when it shall have a sufficient endowment and a suitable fireproof building for its collections.

order genius among the revolutionists — might well have vindicated their position completely. Meantime they operated as the flywheel on the overheated engine of partisan passion, delaying and steadying its wilder impluses and preventing the ungoverned excesses into which it might otherwise have run. Socially and intellectually they brought to a primitive community, which had scarcely advanced beyond the Elizabethan era when it was founded, the amenities, comforts, and ideals of the highest civilization of the day, and thus paved the way for that cultured elegance which was to distinguish the neighborhood for many years to come.[1] In the thin and vitiated mental atmosphere that had felt no more stimulating influences than the meagre precepts of Harvard College (which itself was experiencing a time of weakness and change) they gave the first inspirations of a fuller and richer life. They were, in brief, the advance guard of those forces that have transformed the isolated, bucolic hamlet[2] into a complex modern city, at once eagerly progressive and curiously conservative.

[1] By an attraction that deserves a better name than coincidence, both of the most famous men of letters that Cambridge has ever claimed fixed their abodes, it will be recalled, in mansions built by the Loyalists.

[2] The sympathetic student of pre-revolutionary Cambridge must bear constantly in mind the extreme diminutiveness of his field. The settled part of town was practically confined to the vicinity of Harvard College, and in 1765 contained a white population with the easily remembered total of 1492. Thus, instead of standing as now fourth or fifth in order of size, Cambridge was then about fortieth on the Massachusetts list, overwhelmingly and ap-

At the same time the scanty attention that has been paid to the Tories is not unnatural. Out of sight, out of mind; and the less said about those into whose inheritance we have so coolly entered, the better. The adherents of a lost cause are soon forgotten amongst a democracy where success is the test and the justification of all things. Even the genealogist, struggling to ascend the local family-trees, passes by those temporary stocks that have left no scions among us to-day. Mostly exotic, they grafted themselves, as it were, upon the growing community, throve, multiplied, and then, before the chilling breath of discord and revolution, suddenly withered away and vanished, leaving no roots, no fruits, and only here and there an empty husk. The dead leaves of their records have been suffered to whirl off into limbo. Their fibres never sank deeper than the superficial soil of New England life. The native population, differing from them in religion, in occupations, in habits, in philosophy, and in polities, at first tolerated them, then distrusted them, and at last feared and assailed them; and when they were extirpated spent nearly a century in obliterating their vestiges.

Of all that ghostly company no members are more

parently hopelessly outranked by such important centres as Sutton, Scituate, Ipswich, and Rehoboth. The largest town after Boston was Marblehead. Cf. Benton, *Early Census Making in Massachusetts.*

difficult to trace, considering their numbers[1] and wealth, than the great family of the Vassalls. Like strange old-world galleons, they moored for a time in the pleasant summer waters of New England, enjoying and enriching themselves among the codfish; but with the first autumnal northeaster they dragged their anchors and drifted helplessly away before the blast, the angry waves closing over their wake, marked only by an occasional bit of wreckage or a fragment of flotsam jettisoned to lighten a sinking ship. Many of their friends among the Massachusetts Loyalists played memorable and manly parts in the troublous sixties and seventies of the revolutionary century — some are still notorious for a precisely opposite course. Not a few of their native-born neighbors, humble and uncouth as they may have seemed in the eyes of those fine gentry, are to-day vivid national figures and familiar household words. But the name of Vassall in New England is almost as if it had never been. A few stately countryseats, some musty court and registry entries, an obscure lane in Cambridge, a township in the Maine forests, some scattered stones in long-closed churchyards, and a monument in King's Chapel to a London ancestor are all that now preserve it from utter forgetfulness. For anything

[1] Harris, the authority on the subject, enumerates no less than sixty-eight who bore the name in New England.

beyond these mechanical and artificial memorials, for any vital impression on the history of the time, for any tablet in the hall of fame (even in the Cambridge corner thereof), for any human interest, in legend, song, or story, we look in vain.

The very personalities of the heads of the house have perished, or become dim and uncertain. Their letters and diaries are lost. Scarcely a scrap of manuscript survives to show us their characteristics and activities, intimacies and antipathies, hopes and fears. Up to the present time we have not even known how they looked. For though prominent members of the class that most liberally patronized the praiseworthy efforts of the Colonial portrait painters, their likenesses, numerous as they must have been, were either carried away in their hegira, or have suffered a variety of ignominious fates, scorned as "nothing but pictures of those miserable old Tories." The portraits of Henry Vassall and his wife Penelope Royall, now auspiciously recovered from a descendant distant in more senses than one, have therefore a value even more unique than that always attaching to the work of the master hand that painted them.[1]

[1] The exhibition of these portraits before the Cambridge Historical Society in 1915 was the occasion for the preparation of this paper. Their history after leaving Cambridge appears to be as follows:

From Henry Vassall's daughter Elizabeth, who married Dr. Charles Rus-

PENELOPE VASSALL

I

The biographer of these Vassalls seeks in vain to vivify his sketch with the warm coloring and well-placed details so happily employed by their limner. With the present materials he can but trace some faint outlines on a misty background. Certain names and

sell, they passed to her child Rebecca, who married in 1793 David Pearce of Boston, and thence to his son Charles Russell Pearce. While in the custody of the last named, they were taken to Baltimore, about 1825. Through his daughter Elizabeth Vassall Pearce, who married Mr. Prentiss, they were transmitted to his granddaughter Elizabeth Vassall Prentiss, who married Oliver H. McCowen. In 1914 Mrs. McCowen, being about to remove from Baltimore to Burmah, offered them to the Cambridge Historical Society, and they were purchased by the president, Richard H. Dana, 3d. They are now [1930] hung in the Treasure Room of the Harvard Library.

The canvases of Henry Vassall and Penelope Royall are 25 by 30 and 15 by 17½ inches respectively. When received they proved to be in excellent condition, needing only varnishing and a little retouching of the backgrounds. That of Colonel Vassall represents a man in the prime of life, half-length, full face, slightly smiling, chin dimpled. He wears a powdered wig, ruffled lace neck-cloth, brown embroidered satin coat. The coloring is brilliant and the face full of character. The bust portrait of his wife is that of a young, sweet, refined woman, face oval, eyes large, features regular, brown hair dressed high with a rose on the left side. Her citron-colored dress is low cut. Neither in size, coloring, nor expression is this picture as striking as the other, and one cannot but feel that the subject did not appeal to the painter as strongly. Another portrait of Penelope Royall, aged 17, is in the group by Feke in the Harvard Law School.

Family tradition assigns both portraits to the brush of Copley. Mr. Frank W. Bayley, the leading authority on the subject, announces after careful inspection that tradition is here undoubtedly correct. The style and handling are precisely those of Copley at the period when these canvases must have been executed; there is, moreover, documentary evidence that he painted several others of the Royall family and their connections. See *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections*, lxxi, 284.

Both the frames are old — possibly the originals (many of Copley's

dates stand out clearly enough.[1] Henry Vassall's position among the far-flung branches of his family tree may be seen from the diagram appended. Born on Christmas Day, 1721, the fourteenth of eighteen children, of a fine old English stock long resident in the West Indies, he too seems to have lived, until nearly twenty years of age, on the great family estates in Jamaica. By that time his father, Leonard, and his older brothers, Lewis, John, and William, had already been for several years in Boston, doubtless attracted thither not only by its great commercial prosperity, but also by its superior social and educational opportunities. Of these the boys had taken full advantage. John graduated from Harvard in 1732 and two years later married Elizabeth Phips, daughter of the lieutenant governor. In 1736, to be near his father-in-law's delightful family circle in Cambridge,[2] he bought there, from the widow of John

frames were made by Paul Revere) — and have merely been regilded. Copies of both portraits were made some years ago for Mr. James Russell Soley of New York City. An indifferent painting of Miss Elizabeth, aged about sixteen, is now in possession of Mrs. H. L. Threadcraft of Richmond, Virginia. Portraits of other members of the Vassall family by Hoppner and Reynolds are in Holland House, London.

(Information chiefly supplied by Mrs. S. M. de Gozzaldi and Mr. R. H. Dana, 3d. See also notes, pages 127, 130.)

[1] For the authoritative data on the family history see the exhaustive researches of Edward Doubleday Harris, *The Vassalls of New England* — the basis of this sketch — reprinted from *N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register*, xvii, 56, 113.

[2] The Phips family were the pioneers of the Loyalist migration to Cambridge that reached its height about the middle of the century. Spencer

Frizzell, the old mansion (now 94 Brattle Street), with about seven acres surrounding it, which thereupon became permanently associated with his patronymic. In 1741, shortly after the death of his father, he sold it to his brother Henry, then a lad just coming of age, who in this connection makes his first appearance on the local records, as "now residing at Boston, late of the Island of Jamaica, Planter." With the domicile went the "barn and outhouses," most of the furniture, a chariot, a chaise, and four horses. Included in the same deed were thirty acres of "mowing and pasture land" across the Charles, in the westerly angle between the river and "the King's Road from Cambridge to Boston." [1]

The house, we may note, was already of very respectable antiquity. From the infancy of the town, indeed, a dwelling seems to have occupied the site. It was a delightful location, pleasantly near the river, and just "without the walls" of the original *pallysadoe* that

Phips, adopted son of the fabulously wealthy Sir William Phips, bought a "farm" in 1706 that embraced all of East Cambridge and part of Cambridgeport, and soon afterward the estate on Arrow Street that became the homestead. His lavish hospitality, together with the distinguished alliances made by many of his children, who set up splendid establishments near him, proved a magnet that drew to Cambridge a large portion of its richest and most fashionable ante-revolutionary elements. Upon his death in 1757 the family traditions were well continued by his son David.

[1] Middlesex Deeds, 43/271. About on the site of the present University Boat House.

surrounded the first settlement, and that here followed the line of the present Ash Street. It thus formed an early example of a model suburban estate, combining easy access to the centre of society, business, and education at "the village," with a rural peace to which that centre must have seemed in comparison a bustling metropolis. Both mansion and grounds, as Henry Vassall found them, had been enlarged and beautified by successive owners.[1] He continued the process, rounding out the estate by further purchases[2] and building, among other items, the east wing, with its elaborate interior finish, and along the street fronts the low brick garden-wall, portions of which still remain.

The place, as he left it, differed so materially from its present shrunken and mutilated condition that some

[1] For exhaustive (and occasionally confusing) details of the numerous changes in boundaries, construction, and ownership for over two hundred and fifty years see the articles by three generations of the Batchelder family, the proprietors since 1841, in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xlv, 191; *The Cambridge of 1776*, 93; *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, 94. From them the following reconstruction is chiefly extracted. The grounds are now cut up by modern streets, dating from about 1870, and are crowded with heterogeneous dwellings. The mansion itself has served for years as a "select boarding house."

[2] In 1746 he bought from his brother John somewhat more than an acre on the westerly side, extending from the Watertown road to "Amos Marratt's marsh," and the next year the half acre on the corner of the Watertown road and the "highway to the brick wharf," as Ash Street was also described. (Middlesex Deeds, 47/350.) By these purchases the eastern and western boundaries were completed as they have existed until recent times. Both transactions were doubtless connected with the Jamaica "deal" mentioned on page 161 herein.

effort of the imagination is needed to picture it in its palmy days. Let us approach in our mind's eye, that most accommodating of conveyances. The grounds extend along the road to Watertown (Brattle Street) from Windmill Lane [1] (Ash Street) on the east [2] to John Vassall's pasture (Longfellow Park) on the west. Tall hedges of flowering hawthorns mark the lateral boundaries. On the north front, just inside the wall, towers a magnificent row of five-score acacia trees. The house stands farther back from the road than to-day,[3] for a ten-foot strip was clipped from the front yard when Brattle Street was widened in 1870.[4] From the rear of

[1] Although frequently described as a highway, the present Ash Street was for generations practically a private way, separating the properties of Vassall and Brattle, and leading to land owned by the Marretts on the river bank. In 1750, William Brattle, Henry Vassall, and Edward Marrett Jr. obtained favorable action by the "Sessions" (then fulfilling the functions of County Commissioners) on their petition "Shewing that there hath between the Land of the said William & Henry been a Gate or pair of Barrs time out of Mind in the Lane leading to the Brick Wharffe in Cambridge, that there is a Gate now hanging in Said Place, they pray leave to continue the Same in the Same Place 'till the further Order of this Court." Page 100, volume "1748–1761," Clerk's Office, East Cambridge.

[2] More nearly southeast, as north should be northeast, etc., but for the sake of simplicity the cardinal bearings of the old deeds have been followed in the text throughout.

[3] T. C. Amory (*Old Cambridge and New*) says the house stood back thirty feet from the old line of the street.

[4] On this "improving" occasion the acacias were sacrificed, and the brick wall was perforce taken down. The part opposite the lawn was rebuilt on the new line, but this time capped by a granite coping instead of the two planks set in an "A" shape that formerly topped it. Opposite the house it was re-

the dwelling southward nearly to the ebb and flow of the river in its salt marshes[1] extend the famous gardens. We may saunter along their white-pebbled walks, edged with neat box rows, and admire their choice shrubs, vines, and fruit trees, many, even to the great purple mulberry, imported from Europe. Under the willows at the foot of the grounds we may pause to drink from a fine spring.

Along the western wing of the house a cobbled courtyard (now the beginning of Hawthorn Street) opens from the road. At the head of it, just clear of the end of the wing, stands the great stable, whence we hear the stamp and champ of a long row of horses.[2] On the right of the court is the coach-house, sheltering "the coach, the charriott, the chaise, the curricle, the old curricle," [3] and other vehicular precursors of the limousine and the motorcycle. Here also we may curiously inspect the owner's private fire-engine, the first machine of the kind in Cambridge annals, and a striking illustration of the

placed by a high rampart of imitation stone, with entrance gate-posts, etc., in the fashionable taste of that day.

[1] Mount Auburn Street of course had not then invaded "the marsh." The estate, however, seems never to have gone beyond the upland.

[2] A memorandum in the little account book later described gives the heights of ten horses by name — "Ruggles," "Leehmere," "Boy," etc. Two of them were ponies. In 1758 Henry Vassall had so many horses that he could not accommodate them all, and had to pay Gershom Flagg "on acct. of rent for Stable £45."

[3] Inventory of 1769. See Appendix A.

complete and costly style in which the family establishment was maintained.[1]

This western wing is the most ancient portion of the fabric, as we may infer from its huge chimney-stack laid in clay instead of mortar, and its low rooms finished with plaster made of calcined oyster shells, — carrying us back to the days of makeshifts for proper lime. Its southward extension is continued by a long ell[2] (now much shortened), containing kitchen, "well room," garden shed, and other "offices," some floored with mother earth, some with hexagonal sections of tree trunks — an early example of wood-block paving. Although we evidently have here the strictly domestic side of the building, the whole house, elaborate and extensive as it is, bears the character of the true homestead.[3] It sets low on the ground. Its main roofs,

[1] It was so much admired that there was some talk of its being "improved for the town's use"; but the proposition was finally negatived by the March meeting of 1755, the conservative majority plainly preferring to put their trust in the good old bucket-line rather than in any new-fangled notions. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 134.

The Colonel's elaborate forehandedness was later imitated by his brother-in-law, young Isaac Royall. The latter's inventory of 1778 gives "Fire Engine £250," with sundry entries for "time spent about ye Engine to get it mended and cleaned." Middlesex Probate, No. 19546, Old Series.

There was a College fire-engine as early as 1775. *Graduates' Magazine*, xxvii, 504.

[2] A sketch plan of about 1875 gives the total length of the west side as ninety-one feet, of the north front sixty-three feet.

[3] From the date of buying the house Henry Vassall apparently never had any other domicile. Many of the Cambridge Tories regarded the village as a

crowned by a small cupola in the middle, are of the good old gambrel type. Its outer walls are mostly covered with "rough cast" or stucco, a logical finish for their interior construction of oak beams filled in with brick. Even some of the partitions, on account of the successive enlargements of the edifice, are of solid masonry.

On entering we find that these enlargements have produced a rambling arrangement of rooms very different from the foursquare primness of the typical "Colonial mansion" to which we are accustomed. The ground plan is like a broad, squat letter U, opening to the south. Parallel eastern and western wings of different periods enclose between them the great dining room, which occupies the entire middle section, and thus abruptly bisects the usual "long entry" from the eastern to the western door. The chambers of the second floor follow the same curious arrangement. To reach them there are three separate staircases. That of the eastern wing is still one of the handsomest examples of Colonial woodwork to be seen in Cambridge. The apartments are known, according to their rich and diversified finish, as "the blue room," "the best room," "the marble

summer resort only, and retired in winter to their fine Boston dwellings. The Colonel's brother William had an especially magnificent estate in the metropolis, and his nephew John was constantly buying new property there. But he himself, either from choice or necessity, made no further purchases, and settled down for life on his compact and handsome possessions in the university town.

chamber," "the green chamber," "the cedar chamber," etc. The rooms are filled with pictures; even the walls of the entries and staircases are covered with them.[1]

In the library is a large collection of standard and current books. There is fine old mahogany furniture a-plenty, blue-and-white china, and an imposing array of plate — over six hundred ounces. There is fine old joinery too, balusters, panels, wainscot, carving. But such evidences of wealth and taste, common to all the more luxurious dwellings of the time, are not particularly characteristic of the place. What most strikes the observer even to-day is its flavor of the native soil — its true "Old Cambridge" air — that so contrasts it with its loftier, newer, more sumptuous and formal neighbor across the road. The latter was built "all of a piece" in 1759 by young John Vassall, son of our Henry's brother John already mentioned. A tradition of delicious mystery connects the two houses by a secret underground passage. A bricked-up arch in Colonel Henry's cellar wall appears to be the foundation of both

[1] The inventory of 1769 gives a hundred and fifty. "In the best room" were "three family pictures." Two were doubtless those of the Colonel and his wife, already mentioned, and the third that of their daughter Elizabeth. This inventory, it must be remembered, was that of a deceased bankrupt who had run through most of his property, and hence represents only a remnant of the full personal estate. It gives, for instance, only "2 horses, old," where a dozen years before there were ten. (Appendix A.) Ninety-one pictures were left in 1778. (Appendix B.)

the tradition and that part of the building. We may assume, from what we know of the owner, that the feature was much more probably the entrance to a wine vault. Although this primitive "subway" has caved in under the prodding of modern investigation, the touch of romance indispensable for a historic mansion was supplied, up to living memory, by an absolutely authentic secret recess closed by a sliding panel. Since the "secret" of its location — by the fireplace in one of the oldest rooms — was as usual public property, there was, naturally, nothing in it. Even the appropriate legend which by all the unities should have lingered there has long since slipped away to join the majority of the family traditions in oblivion.

II

Such was the home to which young Harry Vassall brought his bride. For as soon as the place was ready he married, January 28, 1742, Penelope, daughter of the immensely wealthy old Isaac Royall.[1] That magnate, like his wife (Elizabeth Eliot [2]), was of good Massa-

[1] For a full account of this family see Harris, "The New England Royalls," *N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxxix, 348.

[2] She was a daughter of Asaph Eliot of Boston. By a previous marriage with John Brown of Antigua she had had a daughter Ann, who married Robert Oliver of the same island, and became the mother of Thomas and Elizabeth Oliver. The last two married respectively Elizabeth and John Jr., children of John Vassall Sen., brother of Henry Vassall, who married Penel-

chusetts stock, but had spent most of his life on a rich sugar plantation which he had early purchased in Antigua, "in the Popeshead Division," [1] and from which he derived a princely income. There Penelope was born, September, 1724. Amid the enervating influences of the social life on that little island (just the size of Martha's Vineyard), where rum was cheaper than water,[2] where sybaritic luxury rubbed elbows with demoralizing primitiveness,[3] where the blacks outnumbered their masters almost ten to one, she passed her childhood —

ope, daughter of Mrs. Royall by her second husband. The relationships thus established between Royalls, Olivers, and Vassalls, enough to dizzy the most indurated genealogist, are only typical of those which interwove the whole group of Cambridge Tories into an indistinguishable mass of cousins and "in-laws."

[1] See early maps in Oliver, *History of Antigua*. The location was on the northern shore of the island, near "Royall's Bay."

[2] "This island is almost destitute of fresh springs . . . only two worthy of notice, therefore the water principally used is rain. . . . In dry seasons, an article of such vast consumption must necessarily be scarce and dear; I have been informed that rum and wine have been given in exchange for it." Luffman, *Brief Account of Antigua*, 61.

[3] "The tables of the opulent, and also of many who can very ill afford it, are covered with a profusion known only in this part of the world; their attendants numerous, but it is not uncommon to see them waiting almost destitute of clothing, and the little they have mere rags. . . . A few days since, being invited to a tea-drinking party, where was collected from ten to a dozen ladies and gentlemen, a stout negroe fellow waited, who had no other covering than an old pair of trowsers. I believe I was the only person present who took the least notice of the indelicacy of such an appearance, and indeed it is my opinion, were the slaves to go quite naked, it would have no more effect on the feelings of the major part of the inhabitants of this country than what is produced by the sight of a dog or cat." Letter of March 10, 1787. *Idem*.

much, we may imagine, as her husband had passed his. In 1737 the family returned to Boston (though her brother, young Isaac, had been sent back several years earlier for his schooling),[1] and she found herself in a very different environment. From that date we have occasional references[2] to her of a pleasant, homely kind:

1738 June 23 Cash to Penelope	20/-
1740 March 4 Ring for Penelope	60/-
Jun 15 Deblois teaching Penelope[3]	£1
Aug. 9 Mr. Stevens Mak^g Cloggs for Penelope	£5.13

When in 1739 her father died[4] she became by his will half owner with her brother of the Antigua plantation, and no small matrimonial prize.[5] Whether her

[1] Many references to him appear in the accounts of his father's agent in New England. (Middlesex Probate, 19545, O.S.) A particularly interesting item is: "1728 Aug. 31 To cash pd. Pelham for your son's picture £15," with a similar sum a little later. The boy was then scarcely ten years old. The Royalls evidently had a passion for family portraits. Numbers of them are disposed of in the will of young Isaac, and still others are catalogued in Bayley, *John Singleton Copley*. The inventory of 1778 mentions "A large picture of 2 Children, £6" still remaining in the Medford mansion. Cf. note, page 119.

[2] Middlesex Probate, 19545, Old Series, *supra*.

[3] Probably music lessons from Stephen De Blois, organist of King's Chapel.

[4] Buried by mistake on his estate in Medford, he was hastily dug up again and carted to his summer home at Dorchester, where his marble tomb, prepared almost ten years before, awaited its occupant — foresighted indeed during life, but somewhat unable to control his affairs *post obit*. Brooks, *History of Medford*, 151.

[5] By the will of her mother in 1747 she further became entitled to the in-

wooing by the youthful Jamaica planter, when she was scarcely turned seventeen, was warmed by some adumbration of this pleasing truth, we are left to conjecture. Was it a love match or a *mariage à la mode?*

One fact is indubitable. With the exception of a daughter who died in infancy, the only fruit of the union was Elizabeth, baptized in December of 1742. This solitary representative of the next generation was nurtured with every advantage that solicitude could devise and wealth procure. The scraps of family records give evidence, if evidence were needed, that from infancy she enjoyed the possessions of a princess — fine clothes, jewelry, fairy-books, special furniture, ponies; and when she outgrew the last, a horse was brought for her all the way from Philadelphia. Servitors hovered around her to anticipate her slightest want. Strange fruits and toys came to her from far-away tropical islands. She had the best schooling that the metropolis of New England could give her. Admiring relatives surrounded and petted her; distinguished visitors applauded and rewarded her little displays of cleverness. Her portrait was painted while still a child. Unless human nature has strangely altered of late, we may

come of over £2000 during coverture, and to the principal if she survived her husband. (Middlesex Probate, 19543, O.S., and cf. page 136.) It is to be feared that long before his death, however, he had managed to reach and squander all her property. See page 162 *et seq.*

safely say that from her throne in the nursery she ruled the household.

Yet such a lonely nursery was against all family traditions. Boston and Cambridge, Milton and Braintree, were full of handsome and wealthy young Vassalls. The girls were marrying right and left into the first families of the "court circle." Six boys of the name were on the rolls of Harvard during the mid-century. Our Henry, it is true, did not enjoy the advantages of university training, possibly because he arrived here at about the age when boys then were graduated. Apparently in consequence of that lack, he has been carelessly spoken of as uneducated; though the partial list, still preserved,[1] of his handsome library belies the slur.

But the want of a college education was not by any means all that differentiated the subject of the present sketch from the other somewhat conventional members of his generation, or the only reason why, so far as we can now estimate, he stands out from among them a more picturesque and compelling personality. For he possessed qualities not always guaranteed by a college degree. He was eminently a man of affairs, a good organizer, an acute business manager, a leader acknowledged and esteemed both among his own exclusive clique and among the hard-headed, hard-fisted rank and

[1] See Appendix A.

file of his townsmen. Twice did the latter, by electing him their representative in the General Court, evince their appreciation of his political sagacity.[1] His abilities as a presiding officer made him in considerable demand for "moderator" at town meetings.[2] In church affairs he was, as we shall see, the local Episcopalians' spokesman and mainstay.[3] The trust and confidence reposed in him by his own relatives is shown in his appointment as guardian of the children of his deceased brother Lewis of Braintree.[4] His military proficiency was notable enough to bring him in 1763 the not unimportant commission of lieutenant colonel in the First Regiment of Middlesex Militia, commanded by his still more versatile neighbor, William Brattle.[5] If the citizen soldiers of his day were anything like those of the present, his appointment implies no small degree of popularity,

[1] 1752 and 1756. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 461. This was during a brief period in which the town tried the experiment of paying no salaries to its representatives, so that a man of wealth and leisure was almost a necessity for the position. (*Idem*, 133.) It must be admitted that a perusal of the House journals for these years does not reveal any startling official activities of the Hon. H. Vassall. Memberships on ornamental committees and similar complimentary appointments are most commonly associated with his name.

[2] Cambridge Town Records, MSS., *passim*.

[3] See page 168.

[4] See page 144.

[5] Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 407. He is thus remembered as Colonel Henry, to distinguish him from the other Henry, the son of his brother William. His successor in the command was his popular friend, Thomas Oliver.

adaptability, and skill in handling men. Though at that date there was no chance for active service, we can easily picture the dashing figure he must have made at the annual Cambridge "trainings." [1]

[1] An almost photographic account of one of these inspiring occasions has been left by the Rev. Winwood Serjeant, the Colonel's (second) rector at Christ Church, whose house adjoined the common. Supplying the context on one margin, which has been torn off, it is as follows:

"Yesterday the Honble Brigadier Genl made an elegant Entertainment for the Governor, Council, & a number of other Gent^men: After [dinner]; being the grand muster Day for training, the several com[panies] of militia were ordered to attend: & a sham fight exhibited [between] the English & French: The English marching through Cambridge [w]ere smartly attacked by an ambuscade of the French who were [posted] behind Roe's, the Blacksmith's shop, near Col. Vassal. The noble [Brigadier] vigorously repulsed the Enemy, forced his passage thro' the street, sword [in hand] & obliged the French Army to retreat to a strong Fort deeply intrenched [at the c]orner of the Common to the nor'ward of our house; After the Genl [had colle]cted his forces together upon the Common, he called a Council of [war & it] was soon determined to attack the Fort as his men were in [high spir]its after the late advantage: they advanced with great resolution: Victory was for some time dubious: but by the assistance of [a brisk f]ire from the artillery advantageously posted on the right wing, [the eloqu]ence of the Officers, & the never failing courage of English [troops t]hey at last forced the Intrenchments, & obliged the Enemy to capitulate: they quitted the fort to the English, & marched thro the Army with colours flying & Drums beating: the English then entered, demolished the outworks & set fire to the fort, a parcel of shavings laid there for that purpose: Thus ended the famous Battle of Cambridge to the great honour of Genl Brattle, his officers & men: & to the admiration of a large concourse of people: My House as full of Ladies as it could hold: Cost me a great deal of Tea, bread & butter & wine. I make no doubt you will have a pompous account of this Battle in the publick papers. What will make it more remarkable in future History is that no body was killed or wounded excepting one private man belonging to the Artillery who had a pretty large cartrage of powder for the Cannon in his pocket which accidentally took fire, & burnt his cloths a good deal, but was much more frightened than hurt." Serjeant to Mrs. Browne, Cambridge, October 7, 1772. MSS. in possession of the Rev. Arthur Browne Livermore.

Socially, above all, his family connections, lavish expenditures, and ample hospitality gave him especial prominence. He was long looked-to to do the honors of the town on any notable occasion. When, for example, the Hon. William Shirley passed through Cambridge on his way to assume the reins of his Majesty's government at Boston, he broke the last stage of his journey "at the seat of Col. VASSAL, at Cambridge, where he lodg'd that Night" and "was waited upon by a Number of Gentlemen from whom he received the Compliments of Congratulation."[1] He figured also in ceremonies of a more solemn sort. The diary of his contemporary, John Rowe, records:

1766, Sep. 12, Fryday. in Afternoon I went to the Funeral of My Old Friend Sam[1] Wentworth. his Bearers were. Old M[r] Benj[a] Faneuill Colo Henry Vassall M[r] Jos Lee M[r] W[m] Sheaff M[r] Richard Clark and M[r] Tho[s] Brinly.[2]

As to the more intimate family life in that noted "seat," especially in the earlier years, the annalist is supplied with scanty information. One familiar figure in the experience of every young couple is not entirely obscured — the mother-in-law. With the Vassalls her

[1] *Boston Newsletter*, August 12, 1756. The event was handled with such matter-of-course ease that not a ripple of its excitement is reflected in the household accounts for the day.

[2] MS. at Mass. Hist. Society. The concourse at Vassall's own funeral bore final witness to his standing in the community. See page 171.

relations seem to have been affectionate and appreciative. According to Mr. William Fessenden, Jr.:

Being at the House of Mr. Henry Vassall in Cambridge some time in the Fall of the Year 1745 I there saw an ancient Lady, who, (as I was then informed) was Mrs. Vafsal's Mother. She asked me if I knew her son Isaac I replied I did know him, and that we went to the School in Cambridge at one and the same Time. She farther asked me if I had heard any Thing about Him that Day, I told [her] I had not she seemed to me to be full of Concern about Him, for as I understood by Her, Her Son was not well She after this proceeded in Her Discourse, according to [the] best of my Remembrance as follows viz. I am come to tarry with my Daughter Penne (as she called Mrs. Vassal) till Mr. Vassal's return I sometimes visit at one Child's and then at Another's But my Son's I call my Home She further said She hoped Mr Vassal would not make a long tarry for she wanted to go home — She also said Her Children were all ye Comfort she had left and that they were all kind and Tender to Her.[1]

For her son Isaac, on the other hand, her apparent solicitude proved sadly deceptive. When she died, in April of 1747, she left a long and complicated will, amidst all the involutions of which one painful fact was only too clear — Isaac had been omitted altogether. Her only immediate bequests were a thousand pounds to each of her three granddaughters and namesakes, Elizabeth Oliver, Elizabeth Royall, and Elizabeth Vassall. The gift to the last was "now lying in debts owing to me from her father Henry Vassall, on two

[1] Affidavit in No. 129879, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston. Mr. Vassall's absence here implied was doubtless due to one of his trips to the West Indies.

ELIZABETH VASSALL

bonds," of 1744, "both to remain in the hands of the executor until paid." The residue — the estate was all in bonds totalling almost £8000 — after a long trust term was to be divided between her daughters Ann Oliver and Penelope Vassall, for their own private and separate uses.

Thereupon Isaac Royall, having divided with Henry Vassall all the personalty in which Madame Royall had only a life interest, entered into a solemn compact with him and Robert Oliver, father of Elizabeth Oliver, to break the will. But when the appeal was finally carried up to the Governor and Council, Henry Vassall's name was not on the papers. Whether this was due to his absence, or to some quarrel he had had with his fellow suitors, or to his own good business sense, we cannot say. At all events the appeal was dismissed, and the Vassalls were free to receive their appointed shares, undiminished either by contributions to the neglected Isaac (who was already rich enough in all conscience) or by costs of an expensive suit.[1]

Reminiscent mutterings of this family tempest evidently persisted for years, especially in the matter of the Antigua plantation. This, for some time after his marriage, Henry Vassall worked, in the right of his

[1] Middlesex Probate, 19543, O.S., and Case No. 129879, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.

wife, as joint tenant with its other owner, Isaac Royall. Though both were extremely young for such responsibilities, their operations were so successful that early in 1747 they extended them by leasing a nearby tract of one hundred and forty-eight acres from Robert Oliver.[1] The next year, however, they recorded an agreement to hold "sundry negroes and horned cattle and horses, which they have jointly purchased since 1739, and put upon a certain plantation," no longer as joint tenants, but as tenants in common, "so that no right of survivorship be between them." [2] This may have been the outcome of what Royall refers to as "a Dispute between Mr. Vassall and myself in Antigua when he was on ye spot & I stade heir [*here*] waiting for ye event of our Scheme [to supersede Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire] which was a greater damage to me than ye former [loss on sugar]." [3]

The new arrangement made little practical difference, and the Colonel, who seems to have been the active partner throughout, continued his production of sugar

[1] Oliver, *History of Antigua*, ii, 348.

[2] Middlesex Deeds, 47/338. Vassall was then apparently in Antigua, as his signature had to be sworn to in Boston by one of the witnesses.

[3] Royall to Waldron, Charlestown, January 15, 1749/50. *New Hampshire Provincial Papers*, vi, 67. We have here a perfect cameo of the two men — Royall easy-going and gullible, losing money by inaction; Vassall energetic, perhaps rather quarrelsome, but carrying his point.

and rum [1] so assiduously that his brother-in-law became jealous, accused him of monopolizing the plant, and brought suit "for the use and hire of the Windmill, Boiling House, Cureing House, Still house and other the Sugar Works erected and then being upon eight Acres and three quarters of Land of the s^d Isaac's lying in the Division of Pope's head so called, in Antigua aforesd."

Again, however, the Colonel's business cleverness proved more than a match for his slow-witted associate, and thanks to a proviso he had inserted in their agreement, he obtained a verdict in his favor with costs, both in the lower court and on appeal. Thereupon the exasperated Royall actually brought a writ of review, but suffered the same fate a third time.[2] It is easy to conclude that this fresh wrangle paved the way for the partition of the whole estate a few years later, as will appear.

Of Henry Vassall's daily life when at Cambridge, the most extended and illuminating details are to be gathered from a little expense book kept by him during the

[1] Cf. Affidavit of Stephen Greenleaf in the appeal on Mrs. Royall's will; that he worked for her many years, and "whenever he carried in his acco^ts she asked him what he would drink; he told her some of Mr Isaac Royalls Double Still'd Rum And accordingly she sent for it & had it & gave it him and further Deponent Saith not."

[2] No. 68209, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.

years 1755–1759.[1] As this volume is the only known original source of information on our subject, it may bear somewhat extended quotation. The entries, from interior evidence, appear to be in "old tenor," a depreciated currency then fast disappearing, which passed for "lawful money" at the rate of seven and a half for one, — lawful money, the standard of value in New England, being in turn worth only three-quarters of sterling.[2]

The high cost of living first claims our attention. A load of wood was worth £2:10, of hay £7:7:6, a thousand of lath £3, "20 locust posts" £9, 53½ bushels of oats £26:15:6, 8 lbs. wax candles £7:10, a yoke of oxen £130, a hog £16, two shoats £9:18, the freight of a horse from Philadelphia £8:5, and "six boat loads of Mud [? manure] £24." For the table, butter was 4/6 the pound, "a loaf of Single refin'd sugar" £3:5:10, "fish" £6 per quintal, geese 18/ each, numberless barrels of cider 70/ a barrel, and Lisbon wine £50 per cask. Pork and Indian-meal, the staples of Colonial diet, figure steadily of course on the *menu;* but there are

[1] Loaned to the Cambridge Historical Society in 1914 by Mrs. Oliver McCowen. (See note, page 119.) It is 4½ by 7 inches, bound in limp marbled-paper covers, and contains toward the back a number of blank pages. "Henry Vassall 1753" is writ large on the fly-leaf, but the first entries are of the journey of 1755. See page 146.

[2] The net result of all which is that the prices here given are just ten times their equivalents in sterling.

plenty of more appetizing items: oysters, herrings, "mackarell," salmon, sausages, cheese, almonds, pears, radishes, "spinnach," turnips, "garlix," pease, white beans, "biscuet," ducks, chickens, turkeys, fowls, "colebrands," quails, teal, pigeons, beef, calveshead, rabbits, lamb, veal, venison, and quantities of "lemmons," honey, and "chocolat."

For personal use we find sundry pairs of "Lemonee handkercheifs" at £24 a pair,

"a Wigg, £12"
"Earing [*sic*] [1] for Betsey £2:5"
"a Hatt, £14"
"pocket compass & silver pen £12:7:6"
"Desk for Betsey £35"
"cork Shoes £6"
"stays for Eliz. Vassall £25" [She was sixteen!]
"stays for P[enelope]. V[assall]. £37"
"gave Betsey to buy a Gown £40"
"Elizth Vassall to buy a Quilt £25"
"cash pd. fustian for her £4:10"
"Mending watches £2:10"
"watch Chain &c £2:5"
"tape & Camomile flowers £1:16"
"Leather Breeches for Abraham Hasey £12:15"

and several rather unexpected charges for "weaving cotton and linen at the Manufactory." [2] Entries like the above, we must remember, were only the small

[1] Cf. "Gold wires for ears" of John Vassall's daughter Lucy, aged twelve. Guardian's Accounts, Middlesex Probate, 23339, Old Series.

[2] For an account of this curious essay in communal industry, see Drake, *Old Landmarks of Boston*, 301.

local expenditures. Frequent references to "imposts of goods from London" show where the more important purchases were made.

An idea of the demands upon the purse of a prominent man is given:

1756 March 18th pd. Howe for my rates in full £31:7:10
April 26th pd. Tappin, ministerial rates £13:8:3
Hascy's Ditto £3:4:3
August 20th pd. Craddock my Subscription to Dipper [the organist at King's Chapel] £10:10
Nov. Sam'l Whittemore, one third of my subscription to y^e [Cambridge] meeting house £50
Marratt for ye Parson's chaize £4:10
1757 Jan. 12th pd. S. Palmer for my taxes £38:10:11
Sept. 17th. S. Whittemore being in full of my subscription to the meeting house in Cambridge £100
1758 Feb. 3d. Prentiee for taxes £55:19:0
pd. Sheaffe my Subscription to rice [?] £10
Cash p^d at Charitable Society [1] £10:15:6
Ministerial taxes £17:5:0
Tickets for Concert £11:5
p^d 10 tickets Boston Lottery Class N° 6 £45
Henry Prentice alias touch £10:2:1
[an early use of the slang term]
Prentice, touch in full £10:10
Dec. 25th. pd. at Trinity Church £19:10:0
given E[lizabeth] O[liver] & E. V. £3:13
1759 April at Charitable Society £17:17:6

Besides the slaves, of whom anon,[2] various work-people and local tradesmen move in and out among

[1] Cf. John Rowe's *Diary*, October 4, 1764. "Spent the eve^ng at the Charitable Society . . . . . gave away Charity about twenty dollars."

[2] See page 199 *et seq.*

these pages, — "Griggs ye Gardner," "Gamage ye Cooper," "Nancy ye manteau maker," "Welch, Glazier," "Dutch Betty," "Curtis the Wheelwright," and so on.[1] Abraham Hasey, the college carpenter,[2] stands out most prominently of all. Between him and Henry Vassall there plainly existed some close though unexplained relationship. For the support of this humble artisan (and his wife) the gilded man-about-town enters constant expenditures, covering food, drink, clothing, rates, taxes, and pocket money. Even

[1] Another rather famous retainer was "Miss Molly Hancock, whom, as old Molly, we recollect in our early days. She had been employed by the court circle, and her admiration of the Vassals and others of those old-style gentry remained unchanged by time. Her expression was, 'You could worship the ground they trod on.' The past was enough for her, she did not desire to be reconciled to the present. Her small old cottage stood on Garden Street, a short distance from the northeast corner of Appian Way." John Holmes, "Harvard Square," *Harvard Book*, ii, 44. Cf Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 573.

[2] Faculty Records, 1762 *et seq.* Abraham Hasey married, January 17, 1739–40, Jemima, daughter of Samuel Felch of Reading, who had recently come to Cambridge. She was born in the former town January 21, 1718. Hasey owned a small piece of property on the Watertown road, adjoining John Vassall, and was taxed 1/9 for it in 1770. After the death of his benefactor, however, he had to realize on it. See Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 542. Harris, *Vassalls of New England*, 18. *Felch Family History*, pt. ii, ch. vii. Middlesex Deeds, *passim*. Cambridge Court Records, 1742–48. Mass. Archives, 130/430.

Isaac Hasey, undoubtedly his son, enjoyed, probably through the kindness of Henry Vassall, the college education (class of 1762) which the Colonel himself never had the advantage of. His lowly social position is shown by his "placing" in the class, the last among fifty-one. Nevertheless the boy had good stuff in him, and after "proceeding A.M." became the first minister of Lebanon, Maine. *N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register*, xiv, 90. *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, xxv, 190.

his father-in-law, Samuel Felch the tailor, was remembered. Payments are also made to

"Jenkins for paper hangings"
"Colpee for washing"
"Mrs. Phillips for nursing"
"Isaac Stearns for cyder"
"Jno. Walland for a wigg for Hasey"
"Mrs. Stearnes for her trouble"
"cash to pay ye pedlar"
"Welch for mending windows"
"ye Tinker for mending sundrys"
"Dedham Girl for Onions"
"Robeshaw's [1] daughter for washing"
"Crawford on acct. paving"
"Mrs. Sables for nursing" [2]

There is, besides, a long account with the famous Judah Monis, who varied his teaching of Hebrew at college by keeping a hardware emporium.

Though the Colonel had no son of his own, a similar responsibility, as has been mentioned, fell to him in 1757, when his deceased brother Lewis's children, Anna, aged eighteen, and Lewis, aged sixteen, nominated for their guardian their "Honored Uncle Henry Vassall, of Cambridge, Esquire." They came from the Braintree side of the family. Since their father's death (and

[1] Cf. Christ Church Building Accounts: "1761 Augt p^d^ Robishew digging the cellar & 13 days work ℔ Acco^t^ £16. — .8." Louis Robicheau was one of the Arcadian exiles or "French neutrals" billeted on Cambridge in 1755.

[2] The number of entries for nursing, at a period when Miss Elizabeth was well out of her infancy, somehow suggests that Mrs. Vassall was more or less of an invalid.

doubtless before it) they had been educated and maintained "by the net proceeds of sugar and molasses received from Sayers & Gale, George Ruggles and others, at Jamaica." [1] Lewis Vassall was already in Harvard College,[2] as a member of the class of 1760, wherein he was "placed" according to social precedence as number five on a list of twenty-seven.[3] The accounts give an excellent idea of the outlays for a pretty young gentleman in the best society of his day:

> Letter of Guardianship for Lewis & Ann Vassall £4:10 [December 2, 1757]
> Lewis to buy books £4:10
> Subscription to Lovell [probably the master of the Boston Latin School] £11:5:0
> Lewis Vassall, cash p^d him to buy cyder & for pocket expenses £6:15:0
> Lewis Vassall, cash for Entrance [fee] for Dancing [school] [4] 90/– for Ent: for fencing 100/– for him to buy Corks £2:5:0

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[1] Suffolk Probate, 57/309. See Harris, *Vassalls of New England.*

[2] Owing to the inadequate dormitory accommodations he was "bording" at Mary Minot's, with his sister Nancy. Betsy Vassall (then aged fifteen) was also "bording" — probably at school in Boston — at George Craddock's.

[3] It is interesting to note that number one was Thomas Brattle. Nearly a year was consumed in collecting and weighing the data for the "placing" of each class, the final arbitrament not being announced until March or April after the freshmen had entered. The anxious punctilio with which the duty was done may be gathered from the following entry in the Faculty Records: "15 April 1760. At this Meeting also Noyes's Place in his Class was consider'd & as his Father is a Justice of the Peace wch we did not know when the Class was plac'd, it was aggreed the Place assigned him [No. 16] was too low, & after the Matter was debated it was voted that his Place shou'd be between Henshaw & Angier [i.e., No. 8]."

[4] Cf. the guardianship accounts for Lucy Vassall, daughter of John:

Lewis Vassall, to buy a horace & for Pocket Expenses £8:5
Lewis Vassall, pair of pumps for him £3:5:0
Lewis Vassall, Cash pd. Messrs Gould for Holland & Cambrick for his Shirts, £56:17:6

This little book, moreover, opens out a horizon wider than that of Cambridge, or even of Boston. (To reach the latter, by the way, there are various entries of "ferriage," showing that even the possessors of chariots did not always care for the villainous eight-mile road to the metropolis.) Henry Vassall travelled extensively. Sometimes the trips were short, as in May, 1759, a "journey to Plymouth £14:10." In October of 1756 we find the "Expenses of Journey at, to & from Rhode Island £36," and a similar entry just a year later.[1] In March and April of 1755 — the earliest entries in the book — are the road-house charges of a trip, probably made on horseback, through Greenwich, Charlestown, "Stoneington," and Groton to New London, where the

"1758 June 19 Pd. Entrance at Dancing School 12/-. . . . . Dec. 9 Ephraim Turner ¼ years Dancing 16/-" (Middlesex Probate, 23339, Old Series.) Such social advantages were then as now sought in Boston, though it is doubtful if the Harvard undergraduates frequented them as largely as at present. Some years later, in 1766, the Corporation Records mention that "a dancing school hath lately been open'd in Cambridge & divers Scholars of this House have attended it, without Leave from the Government of the College," a condition of things that was adjudged "of bad Consequence," so that the "Disapprobation" of the president and fellows was to be signified to the selectmen, — after which, it is to be supposed, the local cult of Terpsichore languished.

[1] Probably business trips, Newport being the New York City of Colonial commerce.

rider "pd ye N. London Pilot £27" and evidently crossed the Sound. Then "p^d at ye fire place on Long Island at Miller's £14:10," and on through "S. Hampton," "river head," "[Mr.] Blidenburgh[1] at Smith town," Hampstead, Jamaica, "Flatt bush," "ye Narrows," "Statten Island," "Eliz^th town," Brunswick, "Prince town," and "Trentown" to Bristol. The trip, to this point (where the record ceases), took eleven days.

His business interests in the West Indies carried him even farther afield. As has been said, his wife's plantation at Antigua necessitated trips to that island at frequent intervals. One such voyage was made in 1763.[2] Again on May 19, 1765, John Rowe notes: "Col. Henry Vassall sailed this afternoon in Capt. Phillips for Antigua."[3] His own Jamaica property, too, demanded personal attention. Though he early sold some of his estates there, he long managed to extract a good deal of revenue from that locality.[4] One of his journeys thither

[1] I am informed that the name of Blidenburgh is still honorably represented at Smithtown. A little cluster of houses at a landing on the extreme eastern tip of Long Island is still known as Fire Place.

[2] See page 161. On this visit we catch sight of him attending the auction sale of the "furniture &c of John Watkins Esq. M^r in Chancery dec^d" and bidding in "A Mahogany shaving stand £4.18.0" while his friend Thomas Oliver went the whole figure and spent £900 on slaves, silver, and pictures. Antigua records for 1763, communicated by Vere L. Oliver, Esq.

[3] *Diary*, 82. Concerning this voyage see page 165.

[4] From entries in the back of the little account book it appears that in 1758 he received a single remittance from George Ruggles of £1000 sterling "on Acc't of J. V's Estate" and another of £100 "on Acc't of Top Hill

crops up somewhat oddly among the records of the college with which he had no real affiliations. At a meeting of the president and fellows, December 14, 1756:

Vassall, senr [1] (A senior sophister) having some considerable Difficulties, about the Rents of his Estate at Jamaica & desiring Leave to go thither to look after Them, His Guardian also the Lieut. Governr, [Spencer Phips] backing those his Desires, the sd Affair now came under our Consideration.

Inasmuch then, as the sd Vassall's Uncle, Collo Vassall of this Town, is going to Jamaica & will take him under his Care, & also endeavour to assist Him in the Business he goes upon, It was now Voted, That the sd Vassall be allow'd to proceed on a Voyage to Jamaica, for the Ends afforesd. But that he have not Liberty, to be absent from the College more than four Months, but that He be here to attend his Business at the College, on or before the first Day of May next.[2]

Yet why drag in business interests when one speaks of the Cambridge Loyalists? The serious affairs that obviously must have engaged some portion of their time and energy are invariably obscured in popular fancy by the more picturesque side of their life, that

Estate." Cf. the statement of his brother William after the Revolution: "I spent £50,000 stg. in the United States, every farthing of which I received from my Jamaica estate." *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections, Temple Papers*, ii, 105.

[1] I.e., John Vassall, '57, thus distinguished because Lewis Vassall, '60, had just entered college.

[2] "College Book No. 7," Harvard Corporation Records. It is to be observed that such an absence from college was plainly a very serious matter, granted only by the highest authority of the University, and under pressure from the most influential sources, to a student whose wealth and position entitled him to be "placed" second in his class.

This voyage to Jamaica explains a hiatus in the little account book from February 11 to September 15, 1757.

alone seems to be remembered to-day. For good or ill we always envisage them, as it were, through the golden, lilac-scented haze of a perpetual June. Hardly had they fled from their lovely villas before a new arrival in one of them, echoing the envious gossip she heard around her, began the tradition by writing that "the owners had been in the habit of assembling every afternoon in one or another of these houses and of diverting themselves with music or dancing, and lived in affluence, in good humor and without care." [1] That they managed to extract far more pleasure out of existence than their more serious-minded neighbors is indisputable. "Notwithstanding plays and such like diversions do not obtain here," wrote a visitor to Boston about the time of Henry Vassall's marriage, "they don't seem to be dispirited nor moped for want of them; for both the ladies and gentlemen dress and appear as gay,

[1] *Letters of Madame Riedesel*, 195. This, the stock quotation when speaking of the Cambridge Loyalists, has probably done more than any other to settle their reputation with the sons of the Puritans. The pride which these urbane gentry took in their "good humour" is as curious as the disfavor with which the rest of the community regarded it. Their rector plumed himself on the fact that "the people of our communion are generally frank, open, sincere . . . their actions are social, generous and free. There is likewise among them a politeness and elegance which to a censorious eye may look worldly and voluptuous." (Apthorp, *A Review, etc.*, 50.) To the eye of the redoubtable Jonathan Mayhew the Church of England men appeared "often exceedingly loose, profligate, vain and censorious," and their clergy disgraced themselves by "a pretty gay, debonair and jovial countenance." *Observations, etc.*, 74.

in common, as courtiers in England on a coronation or birthday. And the ladies here visit, drink tea, and indulge every little piece of gentility to the height of the mode, and neglect the affairs of their families with as good grace as the finest ladies in London." [1] A favorite form of recreation was *al fresco* entertainments, or in winter convivial indoor parties, at the famous hostelries scattered through the beautiful country about Boston. The account book gives sundry hints of such excursions:

1756 April 22nd. p^d^ ye reckn^g^ at Larnards £20.11.4
May 10th. p^d^ Mrs Coolidge tavern keepers wife in full £2.10
August 6th. Expences at the Castle &c. £2.17.6
Sep. 21 fishing lines & hooks £1.7
1757 Dec. 20th. p^d^ at Gratons [2] £4.15
Dec. 23d Sundrys at Smiths £4.10
1758 May 13th Expences at Dracut £17.5
June 29th p^d^ at Natick £4.10
1759 Apr. 6 Cash p^d^ at Watertown £8.

The Colonel's friend, John Rowe, in his *Diary* a few years later, gives notes of a more extended and social nature. Thus:

1766 Sep. 23 I went to Fresh Pond & din'd there on Turtle with Henry Vassall & wife & (a large company)

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[1] Bennett, "History of New England," (1740) *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1860, 125. The same conditions were noted by a guest of the Colonel's ten years later: "The People of Boston dress very genteel & In my Opinion both men & Women are too Expensive in that respect." *Some Cursory Remarks made by James Birket, etc. 1750.*

[2] John Greaton kept "The Greyhound" at Roxbury. Coolidge's tavern was at "Watertown Bridge." See Pierce's delightful essay on the amuse-

A frequent member of these gatherings, and a close intimate of the family, was a certain ill-defined cosmopolite, one Michael Trollett, a French Swiss, last hailing from Dutch Guiana, rich and gouty, trying in vain to get a scapegrace son through Harvard, and finally disappearing in the direction of Lancaster.[1] Rowe records, for instance:

1766 Sep. 18 I went to Mr. Smith's Farm at Watertown Mr Fessendens Brother & dined there with Mr James Smith & wife Mr Murray & wife, Two Mrs Belchers Mr Inman, Mr Walter Colo

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ments of Colonial Boston in his introduction to *Letters and Diary of John Rowe.*

[1] "Michael Trollet Esqr Native of Geneva of French Extract deceas'd Sunday Morning July 17th. 1774." (Nourse, *Lancaster Register*, 160.) He is almost always mentioned in connection with Henry Vassall; Rowe notes with surprise, "1765, Feb. 16, Went to see Mr. Trollet who I found alone." He owned no real estate in Cambridge, although his personal taxes were almost as high as Vassall's in 1770. (Mass. Archives, 130/430, where the name is entered as "Truelatt.") He had the gout as early as 1759, and gradually attained some celebrity as a martyr in the cause of high living. "Gouty Trollet is going to Live at Lancaster," wrote the second rector of Christ Church, Winwood Serjeant, to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Browne, Oct. 7, 1772.

His son, Michael James Trollett, entered Harvard from "Surrinam," at the age of sixteen in 1759, ranking socially number 18 out of 42. His hectic career may be traced in the Faculty Records. In March, 1760, he was fined 6/3 for five days' absence, and in April, 2/6 for two days. In June he was away "a Week and 5 Daies," and was mulcted 16/3. In July, "Agreed also that Trollett be punishd with a pecuniary Mulct for going out of Town wthout Leave five several Times according to the College Law provided in That Case viz Twelve Shillings & 6d @ 2/6 ℔ Time. That Trollet also for two very great Crimes, One for refusing more than once to come to his Tutr when sent for. The other, For greatly neglecting his College Exercises notwithstanding the pecuniary Mulcts inflicted by his Tutr: be punish'd as ye College law in case directs viz by Degradation. viz. Ten places in his Class and that henceforth he take his place between Putnam junr & Senr Furthermore

Henry Vassall & wife Mr Trollet, Mrs Cutler [1] Mr J. Amiel & wife & Miss Chrissy, Capt Buntin & Two French Gentlemen from Guadalope.

1767 June 8. Called on Henry Vassall & Mr Trollet, spent an hour with them & then Capt Ingram & I went to Freshpond a fishing. . . .

These whiffs of a foreign *entourage* are very characteristic of the atmosphere which envelops the Vassalls in a

wth Respect to Trollett. Coll^o^ Brattle having made complaint to us, That the s^d^ Trollet grossly insulted his train'd Comp^a^ w^h^ under Arms, by firing a Squib or Serpent among their firelocks when loaded & primed & all grounded, w^r^by he great[ly] endangered the limbs @ least of the Souldiers & Spectators; yet he (Coll^o^ Brattle) having said, That he wou'd not desire the said Trollett shou'd be animadverted upon by us; Provided he wou'd give Satisfaction to him for that his Offense, Therefore agreed, that before we consider that his Affair, He (Trollet) shou'd have Time & Opportunity given him wherein to endeav^r^ to make the s^d^ Coll^o^ Brattle a proper Satisfaction. The Pres^dt^ read to Trollet the above vote referring to Coll^o^ Brattle immediately after this Meeting. — The above Vote with respect to Trollett's degradation was executed in the Chapel July 9 imediately after Morning Prayer." In September, "Voted That Palmer . . . & Trollet, be punish'd one shilling & 6^d^ each, for making tumultuous & indecent noises, in the College . . . that they be all of y^m^ sent for before us (excepting Trollet who was not in Town, & whose punishm^t^ must therefore be deferr'd to some other Time) . . . ." In October, "That Hill sen^r^ & Trollett be punish'd one Shilling & 6^d^ Each for making tumultuous & indecent Noises in the College. And that for an Insult made upon Mr. Thayer one of the Tut^rs^ of this House, They both be publicly admonish'd & Degraded, viz. Hill fourteen Places in his Class & take his Place henceforth between, Adams and Hunts present Place. And that Trollet be degraded to the lowest place in his Class. — The above Vote executed Oct. 8 imediately after morning Prayers." The Quarter Bill Book for this period shows that Trollett's fines, beginning with 1/6 in first quarter of 1759, mounted to the shocking sum of £2.6.9 by the fourth — far the largest of the whole college. In the third quarter of his sophomore year he abruptly disappears, and the Faculty Records contain the final note: "Mem^o^ Trollet gave up his Chamber, Novr 7, 1760."

[1] Mrs. Anna Cutler figures frequently in the later records of the Vassall household, — at the dinner-table, on pleasure parties, as witness to documents, etc. She was the wife of Captain Ebenezer Cutler, long the Town Clerk of Lincoln. Her daughter Sarah married in 1764 Samuel Hill, a Cam-

semi-romantic glamour. Passing and repassing, with a freedom unknown to-day, between the languorous luxury of their southern islands and the prosaic austerity of their northern surroundings, they not unnaturally chose their cronies from among the ingratiating *noblesse* of the Caribbean, the swarthy grandees of the Spanish Main, who through business or pleasure alternated as their hosts on the enchanted shores of the Antilles and their guests in sedate Massachusetts.[1]

bridge carpenter with an unfortunate reputation for shiftlessness. The Cutlers on the other hand, though in reduced circumstances, were of eminent respectability, and were somewhat notable managers; and as Mrs. Cutler was considerably older than Mrs. Vassall it seems likely that she was employed as a sort of upperhousekeeper, or perhaps as duenna for Miss Elizabeth. See Middlesex Probate, 5502 and 5510, Old Series. *Cutler Memorial*, 33. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 585.

[1] A delicate sub-tropical aroma exhales even now from the wills and inventories of the family and their connections, — a seductive blend of coffee and spice and sugar, slaves and molasses and rum — especially rum. While the bone and sinew of New England were hard at work buying and selling, importing and smuggling these indispensables, the actual producers thereof were lolling in their splendid town and country houses, satisfying themselves with occasional jaunts to oversee their overseers. This West Indian influence on our local records is typically illustrated by the Vassalls. Old Leonard entailed on his son Lewis "my Plantation and Sugarwork in Luana, in the parish of St. Elizabeth's in Jamaica," and devised to his son William an interest in another "on Green Island River, near Orange Bay in the Parish of Hannover, at the West end of Jamaica and Joyning the Plantation I have given by Deed unto my Son John" (apparently "on the Barquadier black river in the Island of Jamaica"). John Jr. owned "Newfound River Plantation in Jamaica." A cousin, Florentius Vassall, had "several plantations in the parish of Westmoreland, Jamaica, known as Friendship, Greenwich and Sweet River." Other relatives owned a good part of Barbados. The Royall property in Antigua has been described. The wife of young Isaac Royall inherited "Lands and Plantations called Fairfield lying in Commewine River

For the New England gentry, even in the best social life of Boston, the Colonel did not seem to care overmuch. Possibly he did not feel altogether at home among them. Rowe, in those long-drawn lists of guests at dinners, club meetings, and public functions, never mentions him as appearing in town, except semi-occasionally at his brother William's. Around his own mahogany tree, nevertheless, he delighted to gather select coteries, not forgetting the young friends of Miss Elizabeth. *E. g.:*

1765, February 12, Wednesday. Went to Cambridge this forenoon & dind at Henry Vassalls with him & Mrs. Vassall Mr. Jnman Miss Bettsy Vassall Miss Pen: Winslow The Revd Mr Griffiths & Mrs Cutler also Mrs Row & young Edwd Winslow.[1]

We may thus fancy him engrossed and satisfied with the charmed inner circle of Cambridge, extending his own princely hospitality to relatives, intimates, and distinguished visitors.

Typical, we may be sure, was the welcome accorded to James Birket, a wealthy Antiguan who arrived in

in the Province of Surinam." Of young John Vassall's sisters, Lucy married John Lavicount, the heir of "Long Lane, Delaps & Windward in St. Peter's Parish, Antigua," while Elizabeth espoused Thomas Oliver from the same island. Henry's sister Susanna married George Ruggles, a wealthy merchant of Jamaica. All these fine gentlemen resided in Cambridge for longer or shorter intervals.

[1] MS. of Rowe's Diary at Mass. Hist. Society. Vassall's well-known hospitality to the clergy was wofully abused by the "Rev. Mr. Griffiths." The fellow had just arrived as successor to East Apthorp in the rectorship of Christ Church, but turned out an arrant impostor and thief named Mieux.

Boston during September, 1750, on a tour through New England. Although furnished with letters of introduction to a number of prominent residents, he almost immediately selected the most congenial among them and "went home wth H Vassels to Cambridge in his Chariot." At the house he found more guests — "Old Parson Jno Chickly [1] & his wife come from Providence In a Chair 47 Miles." Some ten days were spent in dining, sightseeing, and excursions, along precisely the same lines still employed by Cambridge hosts:

Sept. 10. Henry Vassels & Self went in his Chace to Dorchester to dine with Cole^o Rob [2] Oliver being 9 Miles Returned in the Evening.
11th. We went with a Couple of Country Clergymen, Conducted by Hancock one of the Tutors to See the College at Cambridge . . . After our return from the Colledg dined with H Vassels.
12th. H. Vassels, One Ellerey,[2] Old Chickley And myself Went in 2 Chases to Castle William, which Stands upon an Island in the Bay 3 Miles below Boston and 12 from Cambridge where we dined with the Captain Chaplain &C in the Great Hall

Upon leaving, however, he received an attention which few modern hosts would have either the time or the money to bestow.

18th. Set out for Rhode Island, H. Vassels And his Wife, Mary Phipps The Lieu^t Gov^es Daughter wth Two Servants &C To Accompany me So far on my Journey.

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[1] The indomitable John Checkley, now nearing the end of his pilgrimage, but a notable figure twenty-five years before in the early stages of the great "Episcopal Controversy," Henry Vassall's churchmanship was of the practical kind that always kept open house for the cloth.

[2] Probably the second husband of Lucy, widow of the Colonel's brother John, now deceased.

Under the tutelage of this pleasant party he spent a week visiting and inspecting Providence and Newport. Finally, with obvious regret, he notes:

24th. This Morning I Accompany'd my good friends Henry Vassals & his Spouse And Mary Phips on their return back as far as Bristol ferry which is 12 Miles where I took leave of 'em.[1]

Some of the last of the Colonel's entertainments were those connected with the wedding of his daughter Elizabeth in 1768. The lucky man was Dr. Charles Russell of Charlestown.[2] After graduating from Harvard in 1757 and studying medicine in England and Scotland — a rare privilege in those days — he had set up in practice at Lincoln, on an estate inherited from his uncle, Judge Russell. The bride was one of that fair bevy of patrician maidens whom a later chronicler who loved his "old" Cambridge has described as sympathetically as if he himself had felt their charm:

They blend prettily the courtly elegance which they emulate, with the simplicity of manner that is their provincial birthright.

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[1] *Some Cursory Remarks made by James Birket in his Voyage to N. America 1750–51.* Concerning Cambridge itself, he observes: "The Town of Cambridge is well Scituated . . . but has no trade (being too Near to Boston) the Inhabitants depends Chiefly on their Courts &C being the Chiefe of a County And the Colledge &C There are Some good homes here and the town is laid out very Regular, but for want of trade One 4th part of it is not built." In an appended list of his letters of introduction he enters "one for Henry Vassals Esqr my true fr'd."

[2] "1768, February 17. I paid a visit to Colo. Henry Vassall & Family where I found Dr Russell who was married to Miss Betty on Monday Last." John Rowe, *Diary.*

Though conforming to the general habits of New England, they are free from the more rigorous restraints of Puritanism. Their holiday life is to be a short one. We find plenty of beauty, but no familiar countenances in that group. They have left no copies here by which to recognize them. Not many years hence those soft eyes will look westward through exiles' tears to the home that is to know them no more. Some of those dainty hands must break the bitter bread of dependence, and some prepare the scanty meal of poverty. [1]

Let us hope that the young couple had a merry honeymoon, unshadowed by the fates that were soon to overtake them.

Unfortunately we have reason to believe that these sumptuous festivities in the Vassall house were frequently accompanied by a good deal of dissipation. Gaming for high stakes was a well-known family failing. The Colonel's brother William was left a handsome estate by his father's will "upon this special Proviso and Condition, that he go before two Magistrates . . . . and solemnly make oath that for the future he will not play any Game whatsoever to the value of 20 s. at any one time." [2] His other brother John, who burned himself out at the early age of thirty-four, was described as "giving himself up to pleasure" and "spending his money in pleasures," both in the new world and the old.[3] Only too accurately, it is to be feared, did the

[1] John Holmes, "Harvard Square," *Harvard Book*, ii, 41.

[2] Suffolk Probate, 33/210.

[3] Waldron to Royall, Portsmouth, 1747 and 1748. *New Hampshire Prov. Papers*, vi, 43, 45, etc. It is only fair to state, per contra, that the little ac-

facetious Mr. Jabez Fitch, on observing, in 1775, the family crest of the goblet and the sun, deduce that the bearers thereof were accustomed to drink wine by daylight.[1] Indeed the only "pen picture" that we have of our hero is a sadly unfavorable one. It is attributed to the old family slave Darby, of whom more hereafter.[2] According to his recollections many years later:

Col. Henry Vassall was a very wicked man. It was common remark that he was "the Devil." He was a gamester and spent a great

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count book contains no entries that can be identified as losses at play, though there are a few purchases of the lottery tickets that were then so generally patronized.

[1] *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, 2d Series*, ix, 76. The goblet or vase, *Vas*, surmounted by the sun, *Sol*, formed one of those punning or "canting" devices so much affected by the English heralds whenever the bearer's name could be tortured into such shape. The most conspicuous and arrogant use of the device still remaining is to be seen on the cenotaph of John Vassall, Sr., — the occasion of Fitch's deduction. This, one of the familiar "table-shaped" tombs, formerly displayed no inscription whatever except the above emblems. It was to this that O. W. Holmes referred in his *Cambridge Churchyard:*

"Or gaze upon yon pillared stone,
The empty urn of pride;
There stand the Goblet and the Sun —
What need of more beside?
Where lives the memory of the dead
Who made their tomb a toy?
Whose ashes press that nameless bed?
Go, ask the village boy."

The pride in these armorials seems to have been a family characteristic. Thus we find Miss Lucy, daughter of John, at the age of fifteen employing John Gore for "drawing a Coat of Arms," "painting the arms," and "Framing & Glazing Do." (1763–1764). Middlesex Probate, 23339, Old Series.

[2] See page 218 *et seq.*

HENRY VASSALL'S BOOKPLATE

deal of money in cards and lived at the rate of "seven years in three," and managed to run out nearly all his property; so that Old Madam when she came back after the peace was very poor. He was a severe and tart master to his people; and when he was dying and asked his servants to pray for him, they answered that he might pray for himself.[1]

Biassed and overdrawn as we may hope this description to be — especially as coming from one who declared to his dying day that George Washington himself was "no gentleman"[2] — yet it certainly receives ample confirmation in one respect. Adroit as he seems to have been in business matters, Henry Vassall's pecuniary position was apparently permanently precarious. His very start in life was far less generous than that given his brothers. He was only a younger son, and manifestly not a great favorite with his father.[3] When old Leonard died in 1737 it was found that the principal provision made for the lad in the will was the transfer of £3000 Jamaica currency owing to the testator from his other son John. To suggest that this was one reason for Henry's leaving the island and seeking the well-stocked matrimonial market of Boston may be ungallant; but it must be admitted that his courtship of Penelope Royall began shortly after she had become an

[1] MS. notes by Dr. N. Hoppin *circa* 1855, in Christ Church papers.

[2] See page 219.

[3] He was, for instance, the only boy of the family whom the old gentleman did not see fit to send through Harvard College.

heiress in her own right. Even this advantageous match did not steer him clear of financial shoals. He began to be in straits for ready money as early as 1744, when, as we have seen, he borrowed £1000 from his mother-in-law, Madame Royall. The next year, like a true man of fashion, he owed Billings Bros., his Boston tailors, no less than £621.19, and became so deeply embarrassed that he sold some of his Jamaica property to his brother John, who as a part of the consideration agreed to discharge the above debt, along (presumably) with many others.

This transaction, we may observe in passing, was the indirect cause of preserving to us the only known first-hand statement of our hero — giving us a glimpse of his mode of life and manner of doing business, as well as of his last sickness. In John's settlement with Billings a question arose as to the allowance to be made for the depreciation of the currency, a bone of contention that our more stable monetary system has happily buried. A long-standing dispute ensued, and finally the executors of the parties, now both deceased, carried the matter to the highest court. Among the papers in the case[1] occurs the following:

[1] *Vassall* v. *Billings*, No. 147649, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.

I Henry Vassall do testify and swear that in the year 1746 I sold an Estate I had in Jamaica to my Brother John Vassall which was to be paid for at different Times and in different Ways, among the Rest he was to discharge a Bond I had given to Messrs. Billings's which he did & delivered to me, how he did it, I then knew not, from which Time I heard nothing of it untill the [year] 1763, when a Day or two after my Arrival from Antigua, Mr. Richard Billings & Mr. Ezekiel Goldthwait came to my House and desired to speak with me, accordingly we went into my Garden, when Mr. Billings told me he had Some Difficulty in settling with my Nephew John Vassall and asked me about the settlement of the Bond, whether I could remember if I had allowed Depreciation, I told him all that I remembered was that there was such a Bond but it was so long ago that I did not recollect the Particulars of settling it, but imagined the Bond would shew it, he asked me to let him see the Bond, I told him I could not look for it then, but I should be in Boston in a few Days & that I would look for it & bring it with me, which I accordingly did & shew'd it to Mr. Richd Billings who desired me to let him have it to shew Mr. Goldthwait, I told him no, but I should be on Change at one of ye Clock where if Mr. Goldthwait came, he might see it, which he did and I shewed it to him. About a week or Ten Days after my Nephew Jno Vassall came to me and asked me whether I remembered any Thing about allowing Depreciation to his Father on my Bond to the Billings's which his Father settled with them, because he had found among his Father's Papers a note from the Billingss to allow his Father the Depreciation out of the Bond his Father had given them in Case I did not allow it; I told him that it was a great while ago, and that I did not recollect the Transaction, and that Mr. Billings had been with me on the same subject, and that I had told him the same, upon which he desired I would endeavour to recollect the affair, for he said, if his Father had been allowed it, he did not desire it again, but that if his Father had not recd. it, it was but just they should allow it, Upon which I promissed him I would endeavour to recollect the settlement of the affair and which accordingly I endeavoured to do, when after a good while considering & recollecting several Circumstances, it brought the whole Transaction to my mind, which is as follows: my Brother

John came to my House & taking out the Bond from his Pocket, says, Harry, here is your Bond to the Billingss which they have assigned over to me with Depreciation which you may allow or not, it is nothing to me, I told him I should allow no Depreciation, upon which he said he would not if he was in my Place, accordingly I took a Receipt of him in full on the Back of the Bond and allowed him in the settlement for the amount of the Bond with its Interest as so much recd. in part pay for the Purchase he had made of me without allowing Depreciation then or since.

HENRY VASSALL

Cambridge March 24th, 1768.

Middlesex ss: March 24th, 1768.

Henry Vassall Esqr, subscriber to the above & foregoing Deposition being carefully examined & cautioned to testifie the whole Truth made oath to the Truth of the same, he the said Henry is under such bodily Infirmities & sickness as render him uncapable of travelling & appearing in Person at the Inferiour Court of Common Pleas now holden at Charlestown in & for the County of Middlesex at which Court there is a Cause depending — John Vassall Esqr. Plt. Richard Billings Deft, & in which Cause said Deposition was taken to be used.

The proceeds of the Jamaica sale did not long suffice for his needs, and in 1748 we find him mortgaging his Cambridge property as security on a loan of £779 from James Pitts, a rich Boston merchant, whom we shall hear more of.[1] In 1752 he recovered by due process of law [2] some £90 sterling on a note given in 1746 by his brother John, now deceased, probably in connection with the Jamaica transactions.

[1] Middlesex Deeds, 48/81. For Pitts's next entry in the drama, see p. 191.

[2] *Vassall* v. *Bill et al. exors.*, "Inferiour Court" files, Clerk's Office, East Cambridge.

By what devices he tided over the deficits of the next few years we have little information,[1] but it is probable that his wife's property formed the chief source of collateral, especially her undivided half of the "Popeshead" plantation at Antigua. The possibilities in that direction having apparently become exhausted by 1764, he was reduced to the necessity of borrowing some £430 from his daughter, who had just emerged from her minority into the convenient ownership of a small separate estate.[2] The cash lasted him scarcely a month, and he became more deeply involved than ever. His creditors were pressing him hard and seemed about to take possession of Mrs. Vassall's equities remaining in the Antigua lands. In this crisis he consulted his fidus Achates, John Rowe, one of Boston's leading merchants, who has given a vivid picture of the gravity of the situation — the wife's anxiety, the family councils, the calling-in of friends among eminent lawyers and men of affairs:

[1] The accounts for 1757 and 1758 mention numerous "notes of hand" for various amounts, as well as the payment of a "Bond to John Gore for £112.19.8 L.M." and of semi-annual interest of £132 "old tenor" on "my Bond to Mrs. Henderson."

[2] The sum was secured only by his personal bond, dated December 10, 1764. Soon after Elizabeth's marriage her husband insisted on something more substantial, whereupon the Colonel blandly executed still another mortgage on the homestead February 20, 1769 — his last recorded act and a thoroughly characteristic one. Middlesex Deeds, 68/588.

1765, Jan. 8th. Mrs. Vassall came from Cambridge on Certain Business and dind with Mrs. Rowe.

22nd. Colo Henry Vassall & Lady came to town today about Business.

Feb. 14th. Went afternoon to Wm Vassals Esqr and talkd over his Brother Henrys Affairs.

16th. dind at Colo Henry Vassall with Mr Wm Vassall & Chris: Minot Mrs Vassall & Mrs Cutler

18th. Mr Wm Vassall Colonl Henry Vassall Mr Banister Mr Jnman Chris Minot & Colo Thos Oliver dind with Mrs. Rowe & Me after dinner we Consulted abo the Settlement of Colo Henry Vassalls affairs and after a long debate agreed on a plan of Settlement

22nd H Vassall came to town

28th. dind at Mr Wm Vassalls with him & Wife Mrs Symes Miss Christian & Miss Sally Vassalls Henry Vassal Esqr & Lady Major John Vassall Colo. Oliver Colo Jerry Gridley Christo Minot This Afternoon Mr Henry Vassall & Wife executed the Deeds for the Farm & Negroes at Antigua

March 23d. Henry Vassall Esqr came after dinner and settled with me [1]

These "deeds" took the shape of a formal partition of the Antigua property owned in common with Isaac Royall, whose sister's half, euphoniously described as "charged with certain sums to Lane & Co.," was now set off to her by definite bounds. This moiety was then conveyed to trustees,[2] one of whom seems to have been the obliging little Thomas Oliver, the Colonel's neighbor

[1] MS. of Diary at Mass. Hist. Society. For the discovery of the above entries, and of other original sources, I must thank my friend, Charles M. Andrews, of Yale University.

[2] Antigua Records, Lib. W, vol. 5, fol. 222, and Lib. O, vol. 7, fol. 87. For the abstracts of these records I am indebted to the generous assistance of Vere L. Oliver, Esq., of Sunninghill, Berks., editor of *Caribbeana*.

both at Popeshead and at Cambridge. The terms of the trust apparently[1] provided that the income from the plantation should be used towards paying off the encumbrances with which it was so heavily burdened. In any case it is plain that practically nothing was added thereby to the Vassall till, for in a few months, after a final despairing trip to the islands,[2] the much harassed Henry was obliged to sell his thirty acres across Charles River (already mortgaged to Pitts) to Ebenezer Bradish, the college glazier, for £506.[3]

Two years later, by some financial sleight-of-hand that again testifies to his business adroitness, he managed to mortgage once more his long-suffering homestead for £225, this time to his boon companion Trollet, whom the cards had perhaps favored.[4] This, however, was only an accommodation between friends. His general credit was now as dissipated as his habits, and towards the end his wife had to negotiate what small loans she could secure on her own account.[5] During his

[1] See page 197. [2] See page 147.

[3] October, 1765. Middlesex Deeds, 65/146. It is a significant fact that the next year Henry Vassall's name, although it heads the list of Christ Church parishioners made out by the *locum tenens*, Rev. Mr. Agar, is not among those marked by that ingenuous divine as "very rich" — *videlicet*: John Borland, William Vassall, John Apthorp, Ralph Inman, John Vassall, Thomas Oliver and Isaac Royall. (Original Letter-Book, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.)

[4] Middlesex Deeds, 67/205.

[5] In 1767 and 1768, for example, she made a series of notes at regular intervals to her old friend Elizabeth Hughes, each for £26.13.4, perhaps to

last years, too, it is plain that the greater part of his personal property, horses, slaves, etc., was turned into sorely needed cash. Under such notorious circumstances, therefore, it could have caused little surprise among the Cambridge gossips to learn after his death that he had not attempted to dispose of his shrunken and heavily hypothecated estate by will, and that the said estate (valued at only £1000 for the realty and £705 for the personalty [1]) was shortly declared insolvent.

Considering the ample evidences of Henry Vassall's business ability, and the plump fortunes amassed by

meet the interest on some other indebtedness. On these she was sued almost thirty years later! (No. 106852, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.) Another note of the same series, with interest endorsed up to July 20, 1769, is filed, apparently by mistake, with a collection of documents relating to William Vassall's lands in Pownalboro, 1776 *et seq.* Mass. Hist. Soc. Library, MSS. 026.2 "Vassall Papers."

"Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes of Cambridge, singlewoman," is another of the shadowy figures that flit through the Vassall and Royall records. Her family were neighbors of the Royalls at "Popeshead." One of them, Captain Richard, migrated to Boston, where in 1713 he married Sarah Reed; and Elizabeth, born 1719, was their child. Either in Antigua or at Boston she grew very friendly with the Royalls, for in 1746 old Madame Royall left her by will £300 "as a token of my love." Afterward she became either an inmate or a constant visitor at the Vassalls, and appears in the Colonel's accounts as receiving many small sums for "sundrys" and the like. Through the death of her parents she came into some property in Boston, and hence was able to alleviate the financial distresses of Mrs. Vassall. She died in 1771, leaving a number of the latter's unpaid notes in her inventory. Her gravestone is in the Copp's Hill ground. See Oliver, *History of Antigua*, ii, 88. Putnam, *Lieut. Joshua Hewes*, 417. Suffolk Probate, 14929.

[1] See Appendix A. In 1770, evidently before the Widow Vassall had made much further reduction in the estate, she was taxed 14/4 for the realty and

his brothers, and even allowing generously for the undoubted expense of keeping up an establishment such as he delighted in, we must admit that it is difficult to explain where all his money went to, unless in some such manner as hinted above. Yet let us not frown too heavily on the failings of a Colonial gentleman of active spirit and ample leisure, who wrote *Esquire* after his name in a day when that suffix had a definite connotation. He had been born and bred amid the unexacting moral standards of a clime where the spirit of pleasure had permeated his very marrow. Transplanted to a drier and more searching ethical atmosphere, his early inoculation (so to say) kept him immune from the scorching breath of the superheated New England conscience. Though he doubtless listened decorously enough to the

8/9 for the personalty. Her fallen fortunes may be inferred from a comparison of the taxes paid by the other members of her social set (Cambridge Tax List, 1770. Mass. Archives, 130/430):

Mr. & Mrs. Borland	£1.9.8 real	£6.16.11 personal
William Brattle	1.0.6	3.17.7
Ralph Inman	1.14.5	13.1
Joseph Lee	13.4	2.17.9
Richard Lechmere	19.3	2.9.6
Thomas Oliver	1.16.5	1.3.0
David Phips	1.5.8	15.5
George Ruggles	1.5.8	3.6
Jonathan Sewall	11.8	13.6
John Vassall	2.12.7	14.2

[1] The account book shows that in the years 1757 and 1758 his outlays for petty cash were about £9000 "old tenor," or £1200 lawful money (£900 sterling), per annum.

fulminations of the orthodox ministry around him, in his own heart he felt free to follow the example of the hard-riding, hard-drinking parsons of the good old school in "the established church." And if he shared their weaknesses, he also shared their bluff and open-handed virtues.

For, paradoxical as it may appear, Henry Vassall, like his father before him, was a strong and generous supporter of religion. As such he is honorably remembered to-day, when his imperfections have been long forgotten, like many a character more completely canonized. The Church of England, his family creed, naturally came first in his interests. To its representatives his latch-string was always out and his purse-strings always loose. At the age of only twenty-five he gave forty pounds towards the rebuilding of King's Chapel,[1] and soon after the beautiful new edifice was finished he bought a pew. In maturer years he was elected a vestryman.[2] The fragment of his accounts that we possess gives an idea of his steady assistance to that parish:

1756 Apr. 26th. p^d Capt. Forbes for my pew at ye Chapple £20.5
Aug. 20 p^d Craddock my Subscription to Dipper [the organist] £10.10
1758 Mar. 20th. tax of pew at Chapple £18.18
1759 Apr. 9th. p^d tax & subscription to Chapple £42

[1] Adding the rather unusual but highly business-like proviso, — "One half to be paid when begun."

[2] Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, ii, *passim*.

Trinity Church, too, had reason to be grateful for his aid. He was, for example, one of the largest contributors to its first organ, and on Christmas Day, 1758, increased its collection by some twenty pounds.

All this time he was paying his regular "ministerial taxes" in Cambridge and Abraham Hasey's as well. More than that, he was displaying an admirably liberal spirit by subscribing handsomely to the new "meeting house" that Dr. Appleton was erecting there:

1756, Nov. 19th. pd. Sam'l Whittemore one third of my subscription to ye meeting house £50
1757, Sept. 17th. S. Whittemore being in full of my Subscription to the meeting house in Cambridge £100

Therein also he took a pew, one of the best, "between Lt. Col. David Phipp's pew on the right and Rev. Mr. President Holyoke's on the left." [1]

Most memorable of all, he was the leader of the movement in 1759 for establishing Christ Church in Cambridge.[2] He headed the petition to enlist the aid of the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; he subscribed £80 to the building fund; he cajoled £15 more out of the reprehensible Trollet

[1] See plan of pews in Paige, 293. He sold it to Harvard College in 1761, after Christ Church had been opened. Middlesex Deeds, 58/502.

[2] "Several branches of our Braintree family of Vassalls had removed and planted themselves in the very front of the university, and they must have an Episcopal church." J. Adams to Morse, Quincy, December 2, 1815. *Works of John Adams*, x, 187.

and actually persuaded him to take a pew; he was chairman of the building committee; [1] he bought a pew (No. 3) in the middle aisle, and he served as a vestryman,[2] in either first or second place on the list, continuously from the organization of the parish till the day of his death. Perhaps in recognition of his services he was given the privilege of building the only tomb beneath the church.[3]

In that tomb he was duly laid, with characteristic elegance, when a lingering illness had brought his gay

[1] "Voted that Col° Henry Vassall make some enquiries, and take such measures as he shall think proper, about procuring Stone and Lime for building the Church." Records, October 3, 1759.

[2] Though for some unexplained reason never as a warden, a position frequently occupied by his nephew John, and indeed by nearly all the prominent Cambridge Tories in turn.

[3] The parish records are silent on the subject, but it seems probable that, sensible of his approaching dissolution, he caused his last resting place to be constructed during the progress of his final malady.

The tomb is a brick vault, 9 by 10 feet in area, sunk in the gravel of the cellar floor. Its slightly arched top was originally almost flush with the surface, but owing to a recent lowering of the grade, now protrudes for about a foot. Its main axis is east and west, or transverse to that of the church building. The door, at the west end, was originally reached by a flight of stone steps, now removed and filled in. Against the upper part of the bricked-up entrance arch, and projecting above ground, has been erected a slate slab inscribed HENRY VASSELL. The structure is now almost in the middle of the cellar, but before the lengthening of the church it was much nearer the chancel — probably directly below the pew of its owner, who had one of the best seats in the edifice, although the exact location is conjectural to-day. At least the tomb is not centred on the main axis of the church, but is pushed a little to the west, so as to bring it, not under the middle aisle, but under a pew on the right-hand side thereof.

For the interments in the Vassall tomb see note, page 223.

life to a close — after that fitful fever sleeping well amid the old Cambridge surroundings that he loved, happy in escaping the fast-approaching tribulations which were to allot scattered and distant graves to his family and friends who kept allegiance to the King's most excellent majesty, his crown and dignity. The Boston papers for Monday, March 20, 1769, contained the following item:

On Friday last Col. HENRY VASSALL departed this Life in the 48th Year of Age, at his Seat in *Cambridge*. We hear that he will be interr'd if the Weather permits, on *Wednesday* next, and that the Funeral will go precisely at 4 o'Clock in the Afternoon.[1]

The service took place as announced, a typical March gale being only the weather to be expected. Thanks to trusty John Rowe, we actually have the scene before us — unique of its kind in the annals of Christ Church:

1769, March 22. Wed. Very Cold Blows hard N.West. Dined at Mr. Inman at Cambridge with him, Mr. Cromwell, Lady Frankland,[2] Mrs. Harding, Miss Molly Wethered, Mrs. Rowe & George Inman. In the afternoon I went to the Funerall of Henry Vassall Esq. I was a pall-holder, together with Gen. Brattle, Col. Phipps, Jos. Lee Esq., Richd Lechmere Esq. & Robert Temple Esq. It was a very handsome Funerall & a great number of people & carriages.

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[1] *Boston Post Boy & Advertiser*. Similar notices are in each of the other papers, except that the *Boston Evening Post* adds "after a lingering Illness." We have seen (page 162) that he was too sick to go to Charlestown just a year before. The register of Christ Church gives his death on the 17th, but no mention of his burial.

[2] Lady Frankland with her son Henry Cromwell had returned to Boston and Hopkinton in June of the previous year, after the death of her husband

III

The Widow Penelope after these elaborate obsequies continued, as best she could, to occupy the stripped and mortgaged homestead. We have a sight of her entertaining a mighty genteel company, "drinking tea and coffee," on the occasion of the christening of her namesake — her daughter's baby, Penelope Russell.[1] She dutifully began the attempt to pay off her husband's debts, probably with the aid of the Royalls and the Russells.[2] To raise funds she evidently strained her slender resources to the utmost, as is shown in the pitiful appraisal of her property remaining in 1778.[3] But the earnest efforts of a reduced gentlewoman to satisfy her vicarious creditors gave her little popular sympathy, so long as she echoed the sentiments and followed the

at Bath. They were particular friends of the Inmans, and intimate with the whole Cambridge coterie. A touch of romance is added to Henry Vassall's funeral by the presence of "the beautiful Agnes Surriage."

[1] Rowe, *Diary*, April 9, 1769. Cf. Christ Church register and Harris, *The Vassalls of New England*, 22. Mr. and Mrs. Rowe "stood Sponsors." In 1757 Mrs. Vassall been had a "surety" along with Gov. Benning Wentworth and Charles Paxton at the baptism of young Benning at King's Chapel, Boston. (*Wentworth Genealogy*, i, 534.) That seems to be almost the only mark she has left on the records of her time, up to her husband's death. It suggests at least the society in which she moved.

[2] Trollet assigned his mortgage to her in 1770 and £266.13.4. (Middlesex Deeds, 71/18.) In June of 1773 she got £490 ready money from George Minot, who then paid off a mortgage of which she had become assignee. (Suffolk Deeds, 121/129, *margin*.)

[3] See page 190 and Appendix B. For the sale of the slaves see page 208.

fortunes of that unhappily prominent Cambridge faction that persisted in its loyalty to King George.

Herein lay her undoing. Penelope Vassall's temperament was of the type that copies rather than originates. From her family characteristics, her early environment, and her later history we picture her as lacking in nearly all the sturdier New England virtues. The scanty traces she has left on the narrative of her generation are as pale as if recorded with disappearing ink. She seems to have been too frail to rear the large family that was then customary. Her portrait, painted in her younger days, shows her as small and delicate, with little individuality. The few remaining specimens of her handwriting are unformed and crude to the point of childishness. In a crisis she possessed neither the firmness for independent action that might have carried the day, nor the prudent self-effacement that might have enabled her, along with such ultra-moderates as her neighbor, Judge Lee, to lie by while the storm passed overhead.

The latter course she could have followed with comparative ease. There is no record that either she or her husband had ever adopted an attitude that gave grounds for any active hostility from the "sons of liberty." He had held no royal offices, signed no "loyal addresses," or taken other steps that would have rendered his memory obnoxious. He had not been a member of that inner

ring of Tories upon whom the full weight of revolutionary wrath descended. On the contrary he was plainly far from unpopular with his townsmen.[1] Even the motto on his crest chimed closely with their underlying thought in the earlier days of the struggle — "Often for King, for Country always." [2] His remaining property was, alas, scarcely enough to excite a beggar's cupidity. And since he had been dead for nearly six years before affairs reached the climax, it is conceivable that his spouse, had she remained quietly on the homestead, might well have avoided serious molestation.

Had she realized it, indeed, nothing would have served her so well as sticking to the ship. In those days of fantastic mistrust, steadfastness when surrounded by the insurgents seemed to prove one's sympathy with their cause; flight showed one's adherence to the established order. The paradox was widely accepted as a test by both sides. Thus, the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel based his conviction

[1] A curious confirmation of his amicable relations with his neighbors is to be found in the almost total absence of his name from the court records of his time, while his brothers John and William and his nephew John figure in some rather famous suits. (Cf. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 131, etc.) It will be noticed, too, that none of his numerous morgtagees took advantage of their foreclosure rights as long as his widow continued to occupy the premises, but seem to have accorded her every consideration.

[2] *Saepe pro rege, semper pro republica.* The radicalism of the sentiment so grated upon the loyalty of his nephew, John Vassall, that he abandoned its use altogether.

of one of its missionaries for treachery on the theory that "if Mr. Bass had been truly loyal, I can't see how it was possible for him to stay at Newburyport, a place so much in favor of the other part." [1] Per contra, even the estimable "Ebenezer Bradish, Jun. Esq.," who happened to "withdraw himself from Cambridge and retire to Boston on the day of the late unhappy commencement of hostilities," so "increased the publick suspicions against him, whereby he is rendered more odious and disagreeable to his countrymen," that he required an imposing certificate from a number of leading patriots to prevent the impression that he was "a person unfriendly to the just rights and liberties of his Country." [2] But as for Penelope Vassall, with the fatal facility for imitation that sometimes marks the feminine mind, she did as her fashionable friends and neighbors did, and during the memorable winter of 1774–75 [3] followed

[1] Bartlett, *Frontier Missionary*, 313.

[2] Force, *American Archives*, *4th Series*, ii, 484. May 3, 1775.

[3] The precise date is difficult to determine. She would naturally follow the movements of her nephew, John Vassall, across the road. Foote says the latter was driven out of town by a mob early in 1775 (*Annals of King's Chapel*, ii, 315), but this seems to lack confirmation. The certificate of the Cambridge selectmen who confiscated his property states that he "went to our Enemies in April 1775," but the word "April" is struck through with the pen. (Middlesex Probate, 23340, O.S.) Mrs. Vassall's brother, Isaac Royall, did not definitely retire from his Medford mansion until April 16. (Suffolk Probate, 85/531.) It is unquestionably picturesque to refer to the "flight" of the Tories into Boston, but "straggle" is a more accurate term.

them into Boston to seek the protection of Thomas Gage. From that moment the die was cast.

By the date of the Battle of Lexington her son-in-law, Dr. Russell, correctly diagnosing certain feverish symptoms in the body politic, was discreetly embarked for Martinico, probably with his wife and family, which now numbered several daughters.[1] (Henry Vassall had neither sons nor grandsons.) The Widow seems to have lingered to save what she could from the old home; for after it was seized by the provincials, her "packages" of personal belongings, which Heaven knows must have been attenuated enough,[2] were graciously allowed to "pass into Boston or elsewhere." [3] A quaint exception was made of her medicine chest, long a carefully cherished family treasure.[4] It was too valuable to be lost to

[1] Harris, *Vassalls of New England*, 21.

[2] A far richer and more influential personage, Lady Frankland, on retiring from Hopkinton, was allowed to take only "6 trunks, 1 chest, 3 beds and bedding, 6 wethers, 2 pigs, 1 small keg of pickled tongues, some hay, 3 bags of corn and such other goods as she thinks proper." The elastic interpretation placed upon the final clause, and the alarming consequences, provide both entertainment and instruction for the reader of the *American Archives*.

[3] *Committee of Safety Journals*, May 13, 1775. In the first confusion over the disposition of the Loyalists' abandoned property, we find "Mr. David Sanger directed to fill the widow Vassall's barns with hay," on July 4, and a couple of days later Mr. Seth Brown ordered "to clear the widow Vassal's barns for the reception of hay and horses for the colony service," etc. (*Idem*, 586, 587.) The house itself was by this time in active use as medical headquarters. (See page 186.)

[4] "Jan. 1, 1757. pd. mending key Medecine Chest, &c. £1:6." (Account book, *ubi supra*.) This private drug-store, for it appears to have been no less,

the Continental medical corps. For some time, indeed, it was one of the only two supply boxes they possessed.[1]

With her pathetic scraps of salvage, therefore, our Penelope turned toward her family estates in Antigua.[2] There is a quite believable story that in the haste and bewilderment of her start she had to take along a certain Miss Moody, related to the Pepperells of Kittery, a damsel who happened to be staying with her and who could find no opportunity of getting home again. In the West Indies, according to the tradition, while waiting a chance to return, this unintentional refugee was courted, married, and finally settled down for life.[3]

affords, like the family fire-engine, another instance of the unusual elaboration of the household arrangements. Colonel Vassall was evidently prepared to cope with inflammatory conditions of every description. See also p. 227, bottom.

[1] The other was in Roxbury. See report of committee, June 12, 1775, *Journals of Provincial Congress*, 323.

[2] Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, iii, 111. Harris, *Vassalls of New England*, 14.

[3] *The Cambridge of 1776*, 100. The tale is substantiated to the extent that the first William Pepperell's granddaughter, Mary Jackson, born 1713, married a man named Moody. (Howard, *Pepperells in America*, 17.) The name was common in the Pepperell neighborhood, at Kittery, York, etc. It is also found, however, in the records of Montserrat. The man in question, for example, may have been George Moody, born there in 1726. (*Caribbeana*, i, 43.) If so, the young lady would naturally have found herself very much at home in the West Indies. It was also natural that she should put herself under the protection of Madame Vassall, for the latter's niece, Elizabeth Royall, had married "Young Sir William" Pepperell when he assumed his grandfather's title in 1767. As the baronet and his wife sailed for England in 1775, it is quite understandable that a relative who really wished to go to the islands should have kept with Mrs. Vassall.

For the following interesting variant on the tradition I am indebted to

But to reach Antigua was now no easy matter. Dr. Russell must have sailed on one of the last ships that left Boston for the Caribbean, and by the time that his mother-in-law had decided on any definite course of action the only port where she could hope to embark was Salem — probably the "elsewhere" specifically in mind when her property pass was issued to her. Thither her brother had already betaken himself with the same object, and thither she seems to have followed him. Both were doomed to disappointment. Not a passage to the southward could be procured. In this dilemma Isaac Royall determined "with great reluctance" to push on to Halifax and thence to England, giving the abject excuse that "my health and business require it." [1] From a step so bold and unaccustomed Penelope Vassall recoiled. One more chance remained for carrying out her original plan. Bidding her brother (as it proved) a last farewell, she joined one of the parties of Tories who in the panic after the first bloodletting of the war hurried off to Nantucket, on the well-founded assumption that

Henry Vassall's great-great-grand-nephew, John Vassall Calder, Esq., who still occupies a part of the Jamaica property at Worthy Park: "As you are aware, at the time of the Revolution the Vassalls had to flee from Boston, and it is said they left a girl with her nurse who was never heard of. About fifty years ago my Grandmother got a letter from a woman who claimed relationship as being the descendant of the lost girl; she never answered the letter."

[1] Brooks, *History of Medford*, 147. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, ii, 311.

that shrewdly self-centred and ultra-pacific Quaker community would prove a sort of neutral territory or safety-zone. Among these Loyalists was Mrs. Mary Holyoke of Salem, whose connections in Cambridge had often brought her to that village. Debarking at the island on April 29th, she records in her diary and letters the numerous acquaintances that flocked thither for weeks afterwards. On May 21st she notes, — "Mrs. Vassal & Fitchs [1] Family arrived." And on June 2nd, — "Drank tea [!] yesterday at old Friend Husseys with Friend Vassel." [2]

No further mention of Mrs. Vassall at Nantucket occurs, and it is to be supposed that among the extensive shipping of that seafaring population [3] she soon found opportunity to fulfil her intention of sailing for Antigua. Her destination once reached, however, proved but a gloomy haven of refuge. Her own patrimony at "Popeshead," by transactions already narrated,[4] was no longer

[1] Samuel Fitch, the Boston lawyer, was a noted Tory, proscribed in 1778. Like most of the other Nantucket refugees, he soon plucked up courage and returned to the mainland. He stayed out the Siege of Boston, and at the Evacuation went to Halifax with a family of seven.

[2] Dow, *The Holyoke Diaries*, 87 and 88, *n*. Some of the Nantucket Husseys owned lands in Cambridge.

[3] The widespread commercial interests of Nantucket at this period made it almost as important a point of departure for travellers as is New York City to-day. During the Revolution the West India trade was continued pertinaciously, its danger being more than compensated by its profit.

[4] See page 164.

at her disposal, and she not improbably sheltered herself on the adjacent plantation of her brother, where she was joined by the Russells. But conditions on the island were now very different from those of her girlhood there. Her elegant, affluent friends were gone. Times were bad. The sugar market had been paralyzed by the war. The cost of the simplest commodities had quadrupled.[1] The estates were neglected. Many were abandoned altogether and overrun by the peculiar rank grass that is the bane of Antiguan agriculture. The seasons, too, were unpropitious; a series of disastrous droughts and terrific hurricanes added to the ruin. One after another the planters went down in financial wreck.[2] Most of the non-resident owners, now a thousand leagues overseas, could no longer make their trips of inspection; and their

[1] Southey, *Chronological History of the West Indies*, ii, 425.

[2] A visitor in 1787 wrote: "This country is poor, most of the landholders being impoverished from a series of bad crops previous to the last three years. In fact, the greater part of the estates in this island are in trust, or under mortgage to the merchants of London, Liverpool and Bristol." Luffman, *Brief Account of the Island of Antigua*, 49.

In Jamaica, from 1772 to 1791, more than one-third of the planters passed through bankruptcy, and a considerable proportion of the plantations was given up. (See the sympathetic and comprehensive account by Phillips, "A Jamaica Slave Plantation," *American Hist. Review*, xix, 543.) John Vassall stated that he "had £3,000 a year coming in from his Jamaica Estate before the Hurricane" — a particularly calamitous visitation occurred in 1780 — and "His Estate having suffered considerably by the Hurricane, is the Cause of it's not having produced him anything since 1781," so that "he has laid down his Coach & given up his House [at Clapham] & lives at Bristol." (1783–84.) American Loyalists Transcripts, iv, 388 and vii, 180, New York Public Library.

local agents, always sufficiently unscrupulous, were busily feathering their own nests with what remained. Matters went from bad to worse. In 1778 there was no crop whatever, the drought having destroyed all the cane.[1] In 1779 "every part of the surface of the ground became parched up, and all the ponds were dry. The importation of water was altogether insufficient to supply the demand. The stock and negroes perished in the greatest agony; and a malignant fever at the same time threatened total destruction to all." [2] In 1780–81 the climax of Mrs. Vassall's own misfortunes came with the deaths of her son-in-law, Dr. Russell, her last male protector, and her pusillanimous brother, Isaac Royall, who, ignoring his sister in his will, devised his plantation to his own child, Elizabeth.[3] Mrs. Russell, now thrown with her daughters upon her mother's hands, thus definitively empty, was like her parent the guileless victim of her own countrymen's revengeful greed. Her hus-

[1] Edwards, *History of the West Indies* (1793), i, 447.

[2] Southey, *Chronological Hist. W. I.*, ii, 459.

[3] Suffolk Probate, 85/531. She had married Sir William Pepperell (Sparhawk), who is accordingly described later as "owner of Royalls, Antigua." (Oliver, *History of Antigua*, iii, 56.) The place was evidently in no condition to attract him as a residence, for he soon sold it to Thomas Oliver (cf. p. 197, *n*) and continued to live in England till his death in 1816. It may be added that the desolated state of the West Indies, and the serious interruption of communication with them, account for the appearance in England of many Loyalists who might have been expected to take refuge on their own insular possessions.

band's property at home had been confiscated, and he himself forbidden to return.[1] Mother, daughter, and granddaughters formed a sad illustration of the familiar axiom that the Loyalists seemed to leave naught behind them but homeless widows and unprovided orphans — whose sufferings tempt us to go a step beyond the poet's line and add that even when it is not fated that men must work, still women must weep.

It was at about this time that poor Penelope, lonely and bereft, gathered her little flock about her and, giving a last good-bye to her childhood's home, returned with a sort of childish hopefulness to the scene of her married life. Yet how changed that scene! Marius among the ruins of Carthage was a thing of joy and gladness compared to a Loyalist in Cambridge after the Revolution. The college, it is true, with the placid persistence of an institution whose thoughts were not of this world, still calmly ground out, much as of yore, its annual grist of ministers. But the once thriving village, famed for its beauty, with its common "like a bowling green," was almost unrecognizable. Spared, to be sure, from the actual ravages of the enemy that had desolated Portland, New Haven, and others of its ilk, it yet had endured the almost equally severe handling of a year's

[1] "Charles Russell of Lincoln, physician," was included in the Proscription Act of October 16, 1778. *Mass. Province Laws*, v, 914.

occupation by an ill-disciplined militia[1] and the hard usage of another year as a prison camp. Dwellings had been maltreated, fences torn away, tillage laid waste, timber and shade trees felled, roads ruined, and farms "thrown open, cut up and broken to pieces."[2] "Oh!" wrote a visitor to the famous Inman place after the Siege of Boston, "that imagination could replace the wood lot, the willows round the pond, the locust trees that so delightfully ornamented and shaded the roads leading to this farm . . . but in vain to wish it, — every beauty of art or nature, every elegance which it cost years of care and toil in bringing to perfection, is laid low. It looks like an unfrequented desert, and this farm is an epitome of all Cambridge, [once] the loveliest village in America."[3] Dilapidated store-sheds,[4] with

[1] One excuse offered for the vile accommodations given the Convention Troops a year and a half afterward was "the late Devastation and Destruction of the Neighbourhood." Burgoyne to Laurens, Cambridge, February 11, 1778. Colonial Office, Class 5, vol. 95, p. 385. Public Record Office, London.

[2] Dana to Heath, York Town, December 8, 1777. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections, 7th Series*, iv, pt. ii, 191.

[3] *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 246. (April 17, 1776.) General Greene wrote, Dec. 31, 1775: "We have suffered prodigiously for want of wood. . . . notwithstanding we have burnt up all the fences and cut down all the trees for a mile round the camp." An account of the insurgents in a London paper observes — "They have burnt all the fruit-trees and those planted for ornament in the environs of Cambridge." Frothingham, *Siege of Boston*, 276 and *n*.

[4] "The town of Cambridge is about six miles from Boston, and was the country residence of the gentry of that city; there are a number of fine houses

the ragged cellar-holes and ditches of vanished encampments, disfigured the centre of the town; gaunt heaps of dismantled earthworks encumbered the approaches; and ramshackle barracks, already falling to decay, rattled and swayed in the winds that swept the surrounding hilltops. The very tombs of the dead in the town burying ground had been despoiled of their leaden inscription-panels. The living population was miserably reduced in every sense of the word. Of the natives, many had moved away,[1] others had entered the army, and some had fallen on the field of battle. Of the old aristocracy, the Phipses and the Inmans, the Ruggleses

in it going to decay, belonging to the Loyalists. The town must have been extremely pleasant, but its beauty is much defaced, being now only an arsenal for military stores." (Letter of November 30, 1777. Anburey, *Travels through America*, ii, 67.) For the curious continuance of Cambridge as a military depot up to recent times, see the article by A. M. Howe, "The Arsenal and the Guns on the Common," Cambridge Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, vi, 5.

[1] Overshadowed by the more dramatic departure of the Tories, the much larger exodus of the natives from Cambridge in 1775–76 has escaped general attention. With the very first hostilities the women and children all left town (Letter of Mrs. Inman, Cambridge, April 22, 1775. *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 184), followed almost immediately by the entire personnel of Harvard College, including all the transient and many of the hitherto permanent elements of the population. Substantial citizens of two opposite classes also disappeared, the militarists enlisting in the army and the pacifists seeking a less warlike environment. Among them were many landholders. The tax list for 1777 (preserved in Mass. Archives, 322/123) gives 191 taxpayers in the village itself, 124 in Menotomy, 87 "south of Charles River," and 96 "non-residents." The names are all indigenous: no account is taken of Loyalist absentees or their confiscated estates. That year's total of 498 polls continued to decrease, until in 1781 there were but 417 (Mass. Archives,

and the Borlands, the Lechmeres and the Olivers, were gone, never to return. The local trades and industries that once supplied their numerous minor wants were well-nigh extinguished. The plentiful golden sovereigns that used to jingle in many a townsman's pocket had been replaced by infrequent scraps of dirty and almost valueless paper. The beautiful little church that Henry Vassall had practically founded was desecrated and closed; its jovial English parson was a penniless paralytic, dying by inches at Bath in the old country. Bitterest sight of all was the former homestead, fast deteriorating in heedless plebeian hands, after a series of vicissitudes so rapid, varied, and bizarre that a stouter heart than the Widow's might well have stood aghast at their recital.

Penelope Vassall's abandonment of the property, indeed, may be said to have been the first episode of a chapter in which the history of the estate, long mounting in interest and brilliancy like the glittering ascent of a rocket, suddenly "broke" in a cluster of spectacular

161/369); and even as late as 1822 the number of voters was only 475 (Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 448).

A striking effect of this exodus is found in a comparison of the census figures for 1765 and 1776. (Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 452.) During that interval most Massachusetts towns of 1500 population had increased to 1900-odd. In Cambridge this normal increase was completely wiped out by the hegira of the final two years, so that the net gain in eleven years was only about a dozen persons.

incidents that seem by contrast to throw into deeper shadow its subsequent descent to the commonplace dinginess of to-day. The first and most harrowing metamorphosis had begun under her very eyes, when the home that had sheltered her for thirty-three years was seized by the revolutionists for their military hospital. That term at its best in the eighteenth century connoted something incomprehensible to the reader of the twentieth, but in the conditions at Cambridge in the spring of 1775 it implied a scene of confusion, misery, and horror that at first appeared little better than a shambles.[1] Without the benefits either of reasonable foresight or of previous experience, without time for preparation, without sufficient accommodations, without system, without a regular staff, without medicines, instruments, or appliances, without (of course) anæsthetics — save rum — this last refuge for the sick and dying might have seemed about to take a place in medical annals almost on a level with Libby Prison or the Black Hole of Calcutta. But New England physicians have never lacked courage and resource. Their own vigorous efforts were soon seconded by the best

[1] "We see Doct. Turner perform the office of surgery (or rather of butchery) on one Jones of Capt. Ripley's Company, who had a great mortification sore on his side. After we had seen the aforesaid operation with great pity to the patient we came home." Diary of Jabez Fitch, *Mass. Hist. Society Proceedings, Second Series*, ix, 88.

medical talent from the other colonies and directed by the administrative genius of Washington. Affairs took on a new complexion, the principal difficulties of the situation were gradually overcome, and before the end of the Siege of Boston the Vassall house had attained well-merited historic fame as the original headquarters of the Continental medical department.

When finally abandoned by the military authorities the Widow Vassall's property, as she subsequently learned, had been promptly seized by the civil, as coming under the legislative resolve just passed which confiscated the estates of persons who were "Enemical to the Colony and have fled to Boston or elsewhere for Protection." [1] Unable to make a better disposition of it, the committee leased it for £15 a year to "Capt. Adams of Charlestown." [2] In him we probably discern Nathan Adams, veteran of the French War, later carpenter and innkeeper by turns, whose own house at

[1] Such was the paraphrase of the Cambridge committee in its report. (1776. Mass. Archives, 154/48.) The actual language of the resolve (April 19, 1776) referred to those who "have fled to Boston in the late time of distress to secure themselves," thus ingeniously setting up cowardice as a test of loyalty. The whole shameful history of the Confiscation Acts may be found in Goodell's invaluable compilation, *Mass. Province Laws*, v, 706 and 999. See also the illuminating commentary of Davis, *John Chandler's Estate*, ch. iii.

[2] 1776. Mass. Archives, 154/48. This rental was much the smallest of any of the Cambridge confiscated estates — additional evidence of the condition of the property.

Charlestown had been burned during the affair at Bunker's Hill.[1]

In his new domicile he soon had opportunity to revive his old calling and play the host to unexpectedly distinguished guests. For on the 6th and 7th of November, 1777, Cambridge found itself invaded by the enemy in greater numbers and with more serious results than at any other period of its revolutionary history. These warriors, to be sure, bore neither arms nor malice against the town, being in short the heterogeneous horde of British and Hessians who made up the "Convention Troops" under Burgoyne, on their way from the fatal field of Saratoga to the transports that were expected soon to embark them at Boston and return them to England, according to agreement. The Colonel's homestead and the Captain's temporary leasehold was, not inappropriately, one of the very first edifices taken for housing the officers of the British contingent, its tenant displaying a willingness to receive them that contrasts sharply with the churlish attitude unfortunately adopted by the townspeople in general. Had they followed his example, indeed, not only would the annals of Cambridge have been spared a deep blemish, but the whole

[1] *Robert Adams History*, 12. Cf. Hunnewell, *A Century of Town Life*, 134, 156. In like manner a number of other mansions of the Cambridge Tories after confiscation were leased to various Charlestown refugees, by a kind of poetic justice.

history of the Convention Troops, and thus of the later stages of the Revolution itself, might have been very different from the actual outcome.[1] As it befell, however, the expected speedy embarkation was postponed indefinitely, and the notorious stand taken by the American Congress as to the fulfilment of the Saratoga Convention resulted in the occupation of the house by the captives for a full year.

Not until November, 1778, were the last of the luckless troops and subordinate officers marched away from Cambridge on the succeeding stage of their phantasmal journey to freedom, and Henry Vassall's mansion bade a final farewell to the scarlet and gold of that royal uniform which he himself had been wont to don. Then it was that the old house, already headquarters-hospital, prison and barracks, sank to the lowest level of its military history and became mere loot. Tired of the farce of "preserving" and "improving" property which they never intended the owners should repossess, the Massachusetts authorities ordered a general sale of the Loyalists' remaining estates. "William How, trader," of Cambridge was the "agent" for what poor personalty of Madame Vassall's could still be ferreted out by her zealous and "patriotic" fellow townsmen.[2] The "ven-

[1] For fuller consideration of this matter see the first essay in this volume.
[2] Mass. Archives, 154/332.

due" took place April 1, 1779, with ironical solemnity and every outward form that could give a color of legality to this final act of injustice.[1] Everything went, from the tattered wreck of the great chariot to "3 beehives," from which, as from other lordlier homes, the Tory drones had long ago flown. Nearly all the useful articles having already disappeared, the bulk of the sale-catalogue was composed of the pictures, mostly put up in arbitrary lots of half-a-dozen, and knocked down to whichever of the local Bradishes, Palmers, Reads, Prentices, and Wyeths would take them. The total realized the apparently imposing sum of £275 — in paper, or "old Emission," but worth in "silver money £25." [2]

The realty, though it could not be treated so cavalierly, was disposed of quite as effectually. The Act of 1780, by which "absentee" estates were to be sold at auction, excepted such as were under mortgage before April 19, 1775 — of course with the understanding that the mortgagee was a good "friend of liberty." Whether by virtue of his unquestioned prominence in such a

[1] Certificate of Selectmen, June 1, 1778; order for inventory, June 8, 1778; inventory dated June 24, 1778. (See Appendix B); commissioners sworn January 11, 1779; sale, April 1, 1779; agent's account allowed and filed December 5, 1781. (Middlesex Probate, No. 23342, O.S.) The last date seems a clue to the time of the real owner's return, actual or impending.

[2] In Mass. Archives, 154/257, the personalty before the sale was appraised at £29. As to the pictures, see page 127.

capacity, or by a technical priority of claim, the almost forgotten James Pitts, the Colonel's creditor of 1748,[1] now reappears upon the scene. As a matter of fact he reappears only in name, since he had died in 1776. But he had left behind as executor his enterprising and equally "patriotic" son John. As soon as the Legislature, of which the latter was a member, began to consider the above action, he evidently took steps to secure his testator's long-dormant and possibly doubtful claims to the Vassall place, cannily making hay while the sun shone in a field where there was none to say him nay.[2] So complete was the success of his machinations that by the time Mrs. Vassall reached Cambridge again (perhaps hastened by rumors of what had been going on in her absence) she found herself as thoroughly dispossessed as the veriest ghost.

Had John Pitts taken his gentle little victim into his confidence he might have confessed that the game proved hardly worth the candle. In 1781 he complained to his brother-in-law that the old gentleman's numerous and widely scattered properties were being so mercilessly stripped and at the same time so mercilessly taxed that they must be sold. The next year he wrote that

[1] See page 162.

[2] "Jn° Pitt, Esq.," a "non-resident," was taxed £5.4.6 for real estate in Cambridge in 1777. (Mass. Archives, 322/123.) The property is not specified, but there is little room for doubt on the question.

the scarcity of cash and the enormous taxes were driving folks mad, but that much of his father's property had fortunately been got rid of. "We have also disposed of Vassalls place at Cambridge to Nathaniel Tracy Esq. for Eight hundred and fifty pounds, payable in one year." The price, he added, in view of the tremendous shrinkage in realty values, was considered very high — but so were the risks of collecting it from a purchaser whose interests were mainly in shipping.[1]

Nathaniel Tracy was in effect one of those merchant princes whose romantic fortunes and extraordinary idiosyncrasies have cast a glamour over the history of the ancient town of Newburyport.[2] He had a passion for acquiring fine houses. His purchases, it is said, extended along the whole Atlantic coast as far as Philadelphia.[3] Among his Cambridge takings at this period were the three hundred acres of the famous "Ten Hills Farm," the former seat of the Temples.[4] He had already bought the John Vassall estate across the road, and seems to have added the homestead merely because it was adjacent and in the market. But he flew his

[1] Senator John Pitts to Colonel Warner of Portsmouth, Boston, May 10, 1782. *James Pitts Memorial*, 58. For the conveyance itself, dated April 14, 1782, see Middlesex Deeds, 83/170.

[2] For biography and portrait see J. J. Currier, *Ould Newbury*, 554. *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, xxv, 193.

[3] *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, 101.

[4] Middlesex Deeds, 83/171.

financial kite too high. His sevenscore merchantmen and cruising ships were wrecked or captured, his huge government contracts were repudiated, and in a few years he conveyed his property for the benefit of creditors.[1] The old place hung in the wind for some time, till finally taken, along with the other family seat (a total of over one hundred and forty acres), by Andrew Craigie in 1792, "being the late Homestead of Henry Vassall, Esquire."[2]

The active and ingenious Mr. Craigie had an intimate knowledge of the house already. He had been the first Apothecary General of the Continental Army, and as such a constant attendant at the former medical headquarters — high-priest, so to speak, at the shrine of that chest[3] which once concealed a moiety of all his malodorous mysteries. He too was now immensely wealthy, but for him also the whirligig of time brought in its revenges; his ambitious projects in Cambridge real estate proved premature, and like so many other owners of the old mansion he died a bankrupt.[4]

[1] 1786. Middlesex Deeds, 94/383.

[2] Middlesex Deeds, 110/406.

[3] See page 176.

[4] 1819. "Well would it have been for him if his friends could have said to him, — 'Thou hast no speculation in thine eyes.' But he had, and a great deal of it. His plan was to develop Lechmere's Point, called in my younger days 'The Pint,' and bring into the market the land he had secured there. The new road to 'The Colleges,' now Cambridge Street, the bridge to Boston, still called Craigie's bridge, the removal to the 'Pint' of the Court House and

That, to be sure, was long after the Widow Vassall's day. During her lifetime the beautiful old place seemed doomed to be bandied about with true American *insouciance* — now as a mere land speculation, now to round out a deal in neighboring properties — and in requital seeming to bring only bad luck to its holders. Its character as a homestead was utterly gone. None of its transitory owners lived in it. Up to the time it was sold by the Pittses, Captain Adams continued his precarious occupancy.[1] If young Pitts and inherent probability are to be trusted, he took good care to leave as little as possible behind him. Both Tracy and Craigie naturally preferred the better preserved grandeurs of the newer mansion across the road. The former leased the old house to one Fred Geyer, grandson of Governor Belcher, who had owned it from 1717 to 1719; the latter to Mr. Bossenger Foster, his brother-in-law and a "gentleman of leisure," who like Trollett died of the gout.[2]

Jail, were all parts of this plan. . . . The [turnpike] toll which was to repay the building was found represented only by the funeral knell of departed funds." John Holmes, "Andrew Craigie."

[1] Although the "agents" of the confiscated estates were authorized to lease them for only one year, Mr. Mason, in the same way, kept his occupancy of the Phips house for a decade. (*Historic Guide to Cambridge*, 83. See note, page 54.) Adams's name is repeated as the tenant of the Vassall house in Mass. Archives, 154/382, under the assigned date of 1782. But shortly after the sale to Tracy, he is described as "of Stoneham" (1783). Wyman, *Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown*, i, 10.

[2] Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 547, etc.; Camb. Hist. Soc., *Proc.* ix, 7.

Its rightful mistress could only look on in silent hopelessness as the estate drifted further and further beyond her reach. Unlike some of the more fortunate and forceful Loyalists who dared to return after the war, she had no influential champions to cajole or bully the authorities into restoring her property. Her immediate male relatives were in England, and for all the good they did her might as well have been in an old ladies' home. Her brother Isaac Royall, "confessedly a gen[t] of much timidity," was dying at Kensington; her nephew, John Vassall, was "living very comfortably" at Clapham, spending his time in grumbling and pension-hunting; her brother-in-law, William Vassall, was busy writing lachrymose letters bewailing his own lost property in Boston. Her former neighbors who had espoused the patriot cause had little but hard looks and muttered accusations for anyone who could be held even remotely responsible for the sore straits in which they now found themselves.

Outcast and homeless in Cambridge, she took refuge in Boston, most likely with the Russell connections. There she passed the wretched remainder of her days, in sad contrast with her earlier years. She had been ruthlessly robbed of her property by the very government under which she had sought protection. Both her own and her husband's families had vanished; she had

neither son nor grandson upon whom to lean; her household consisted entirely of "elegant famales" as dependent as herself. As for earning a livelihood, pride forbade what incompetence had already made impossible. To poverty and age were superadded the anxieties connected with the affairs of her unlucky spouse, whose old debts oppressed and distracted her timid nature. In a kind of financial nightmare long-forgotten creditors pounced ghoulishly upon her and pursued her endlessly from court to court. It is some comfort to know that in most cases she was able to escape their clutches.[1]

But there was a brighter side to the picture. Her own family connections did not entirely desert her. Among the exiles in London was a kindly cousin, Joseph Royall, "late of Jamaica."[2] By some unexplained good fortune he had been able to retain from the spoilers more than twenty-five acres of land in Dorchester and Milton, with house, barn, etc. These, in 1782, he conveyed to her, "in consideration of the affection I bear my cousin Penelope Vassall of Boston,

[1] E. g. *Procter* v. *Vassall* (1794), on her notes made in 1767–68. Verdict for defendant with costs, affirmed on appeal. (No. 106852, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.) She was also sued on her own more recent notes by John Semple of Glasgow (1786), William Mackay of Boston (1788), etc. A quaint official testimony to her poverty is seen in the sheriff's returns on these writs, the usual article attached being "a chair, the property of the defent."

[2] 1778. Harris, "The New England Royalls," *N. E. Hist. Gen. Register*, xxxix, 354, *n.*

widow, and for five shillings." She in turn sold them in various parcels as fast as she could, eking out on the proceeds her dreary existence.[1]

Her greatest benefactor of all was her nephew by marriage, Thomas Oliver, now of Bristol, England, a generous little gentleman who had proved a true friend in need to more than one of his former neighbors in Cambridge. His family estates in Antigua adjoined those of the Royalls, and although Mrs. Vassall's depreciated share of the latter plantation was in the hands of creditors, he was evidently convinced by practical experience that the place was capable of successful rehabilitation. As a trustee [2] for the Widow, therefore, he seems to have undertaken the redemption of the property, gradually paying off the debts with which it was burdened, and (aided by a general improvement of local conditions) bringing it to such a pitch of efficiency that by 1791 her interest in it was valued at £5167. At that date he took a formal lease from her for nine years at £350 per annum, and in 1795, all the encumbrances having been cleared up, he received a conveyance, presumably by way of mortgage.[3] Although it is pretty certain

[1] Suffolk Deeds, *passim*.

[2] See page 164. Oliver was noted for his success as a planter.

[3] Antigua Records, Lib. V, vol. 5, fol. 86, and Lib. O, vol. 7, fol. 87. His lease of Mrs. Vassall's half was simultaneous with a purchase of Isaac Royall's, containing about sixty acres and forty slaves. (*Idem*, Lib. W, vol.

that the greater part of the actual proceeds of these transactions had already been advanced to Penelope in a long series of anticipatory loans, which had kept her from starvation for years past, yet there is reason to believe that, thanks to the warm-hearted ex-lieutenant-governor, the close of her life was blessed with something resembling an income, a luxury to which she had been unaccustomed for almost thirty years.[1]

At last, as the new century dawned, her poor shadow faded from the scene, after seventy-six years in a world wherein she had found that wealth and beauty and happiness are but shadows too. She was buried beside her husband, one dark November day [2] of 1800, in the tomb he built beneath Christ Church. By her will,[3] feebly scrawled on a bit of note-paper, she left all her estate "in possession, remainder or reversion whether in the United States or the Island of Antigua," to her "only child Elizabeth Russell of Boston, widow," and appointed her as administratrix. But two years later, be-

5, fol. 222.) The supposition of a mortgage is necessary in view of the fact that after Mrs. Vassall's death her heirs sold the same property to him outright (1806) for about £6000. (*Idem*, Lib. F, vol. 7, fol. 203.) He thus became owner of the entire Royall plantation.

[1] In 1794, for example, she was able to turn the tables of the law by suing George Bacon of Stockbridge for a loan to him of £12. No. 98194, "Early Court Files," Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.

[2] She died on the 19th. Harris, "The New England Royalls," *N. E. Hist. Gen. Register*, xxxix, 353.

[3] Suffolk Probate, No. 21362.

fore the estate had been closed, Mrs. Russell was laid beside her parents,[1] and the lingering possibility that the old Vassall homestead might welcome back its rightful occupants was gone forever.

IV

No mention of Henry Vassall or of his tomb would be complete without some account of his slaves, Anthony, or "Tony," the father and "Darby" the son, already alluded to. Their position in Cambridge annals is unique. They afford our only instance of well-authenticated cases illustrating the fortunes of ex-slaves of the "George Washington's body-servant" type. Tony's indeterminate, serio-comic *rôle* during the Revolution — half chattel, half independent wage-earner, now quasi-foundling and pauper, now high financier — quaintly suggests the political and civic no-man's-land through

[1] Mrs. Russell left no will and apparently no property save the Antigua interests. Just what these amounted to is hard to say. For several years after her death they were so little considered that it was not thought worth while even to settle her estate. Then, as has been noted, they were sold by her daughters to Oliver, nominally for £6000. Probably to satisfy the conveyancers, administration was taken out in 1807, but the papers were so carelessly drawn that one cannot but feel they represented very little. Some of the printed forms are of the wrong kind, others are erroneously indorsed, and Penelope Vassall is described throughout as intestate. (Suffolk Probate, Nos. 21362 and 23010.) The bonds were set at $20,000. If this sum, according to the usual rule, was twice the value of the estate, we may infer the latter was not more than about £2000, which figure may have represented the actual amount paid (or already advanced) by Oliver.

which, lacking the short cut of an authoritative *pronunciamento*,[1] the negroes of New England passed on their way from servitude to citizenship. Darby, on the other hand, surviving far into the nineteenth century and within living memory, forms as it were an ebon link connecting the heroic and the modern periods of the town history. Father and son together have earned our gratitude, too, for perpetuating between them most of the scanty traditions of their "family" that we still possess.

Tony, according to these traditions,[2] was shanghaied from Spain at an early age, with the lure of "seeing the world." The particular portion of the universe exhibited to him was the island of Jamaica. Here he was bought for a coachman by young Harry Vassall, and his travels were soon extended to Cambridge. Like master, like man. When the Colonel married Penelope Royall,

[1] The Massachusetts legislators could never quite screw up their courage to the point of emancipating the slaves within their jurisdiction. The subject was debated "for many years" without result; and even in 1777, when the country was ringing with the battle-cry of freedom, and the negroes themselves were petitioning earnestly for recognition, a bill for that purpose was tabled on the second reading, while a letter to Congress was prepared. With a sorry mixture of timidity and arrogance it stated that the delay was due to a fear that action by Massachusetts might have too "extensive influence" on "our Brethren in the other Colonies." The letter itself was tabled, and nothing more was done. Mass. Archives, 197/125. *Historic Magazine, Second Series*, v, 52.

[2] See a manuscript note, apparently taken down by Rev. Dr. Hoppin from the statements of Darby about 1855, preserved in the papers of Christ Church.

his coachman espoused her maid "Coby,"[1] or Cuba (said, in spite of her name, to have been a full-blooded African), and the happy pair brought up a numerous family.[2]

How many compatriots they had in the Vassall household during its heyday is uncertain. The Colonel unquestionably brought other slaves with him from Jamaica besides Tony. A number were contributed by Mrs. Vassall as a part of her dowry. The names of nearly a score are scattered under various dates through the scanty manuscripts mentioning such matters. Added to the similar establishments of the other rich West India planters of the town, they gave pre-revolutionary Cambridge the strange notability of a black population nearly three times greater than that of any other place with less than 2000 inhabitants in the whole province.[3] In some of these establishments they were so numerous that, as at the Royalls, they had separate "quarters," after the Southern custom. In others, as (traditionally) at the Borlands, they occupied an extra story of the main house. In many churches they were

[1] Old Isaac Royall by his will in 1738 had bequeathed to his daughter "one Negro Girl called Present and one Negro Woman called Abba & her Six Children named Robin Coba Walker Nuba Trace & Tobey to hold to my Said Daughter & her Heirs forever [!]." Middlesex Probate, 19545, O.S.

[2] Several of them can be seen on the inventory of 1769. It is amusing to notice that according to cash values therein Tony was scarcely half the man his wife was. See Appendix A.

[3] The special census in 1754 of "Slaves of 16 Years and over," and the

given a special gallery; but just what was done with them at Christ Church, which had no galleries, and where they must have been particularly in evidence, is not clear.[1] On a list[2] of the families of that parish, drawn up by the rector in 1763, Colonel Vassall is put down for ten persons. Since himself, his wife, and Miss Elizabeth account for only three, we conclude that even at this date, when his fortunes were on the wane, he had at least seven servants worth mentioning in such a connection. And since the expense book already quoted gives no clue to any servant receiving regular wages, we may further conclude that all seven were slaves.

"lost" general census of 1765, recently rediscovered by Benton, yield the following comparisons for the towns nearest to Cambridge in size:

Order in Population		1754 Slaves	1765 Negroes	Total
36th.	Sudbury	14	27	1772
37th.	Harwich	14	23	1772
38th.	Attleboro'	10	15	1739
39th.	Cambridge	56	90	1582
40th.	Concord	15	27	1564
41st.	Boxford	8	17	1550
42nd.	Reading	20	34	1537

A striking exception, due of course to the same causes, is found in the little hamlets of

Lexington	24	44	912
Medford	34	47	790

[1] Some of the largest slaveholders — Borland, Phips, John Vassall — had two pews each, and, as many of the side pews were never bought, there would be plenty of room for such other slaves as actually attended; but the religious instruction of their servants was scarcely a strong point with the easy-going proprietors of "Church Row."

[2] Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Massachusetts*, 502.

The sable brethren, despite their lowly status, occupy a prominent place in the above expense book. The daily marketing and "sundrys," it appears, were usually intrusted to "Tony," "Jack," or "Jemmy" [1] — sometimes to "Merryfield." Then there were "leather breeches for Jemmy £7;" and for his more expansive father, "pd. Hall for toneys breeches £8.5." There are also such items as "pd. peak [2] for Nursing Cuba £6;" and on Christmas Day, "given servants £5.12.6."

Entries like these are characteristic of the kindly and paternal relations that almost always mitigated the conditions of slavery in New England. The indefensible ethics of the system were practically obscured by the simple-hearted friendliness that made the Africans well-nigh members of the family.[3] In many households they even ate at their master's table. Indeed William Vassall, the Colonel's brother, who owned swarms of negroes in Jamaica, had "scruples" as to retaining them in bondage at all. He actually consulted Bishop Butler on the question, but decided — doubtless with consider-

[1] Son of Tony and older brother of Darby.

[2] Cf. the entry in the interleaved almanac of Rev. Andrew Eliot of Boston: "1744, Mar. 14 Mary Peake came to nurse our Child at 18/℔ week."

[3] Cf. the numerous entries regarding the death of "Negro George," one of Isaac Royall's slaves. E.g., "1776 March, To the Sexton & Bearers for negro Georges Funeral 15/7; To time in Apprizing George's Cloathes & takg Care of them 3/–" Middlesex Probate, 19546, Old Series.

able relief — to make no change when that famous casuist reassured him "on Scripture ground." [1]

Strict historical impartiality compels the admission that there was another side to the shield. In base return for their humane treatment the slaves sometimes displayed rank ingratitude and treachery. Morally and intellectually they were for the most part mere children, and occasionally exceedingly naughty children. The court records [2] give us a shocking instance of perversity in the Vassall household itself — a crime as black as the perpetrators:

The Jurors for the said Lord ye King Upon Their Oath Present That William Heley of Cambridge in the County aforesaid Laborer and Robbin [3] of Cambridge aforesd Laborer and Servant of Henry Vassell of Cambridge aforesd Esqr. did on ye Ninth of May last at Cambridge aforesaid With force and Armes Brake & Enter the Dwelling house in Cambridge aforesd of William Brattle Esq. and with force as aforesd feloniously Take Steal & Carry away Out of ye Same house An Iron Chest and the Money Goods and Chattels hereafter mentioned then in the Same Chest being, namely, Six hundred and three Spanish Milld Dollars, one half of a Dollar and one Eighth of a Dollar, One hundred and Seventy Pieces of Eight, One Large

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[1] Dexter to Belknap. *Belknap Papers*, ii, 384. See also the working-over of this famous section of the Belknap correspondence by such authorities as G. H. Moore, *History of Slavery in Massachusetts*, and E. Washburn, *Mass. Hist Soc. Collections, 4th Series*, iv, 333, and *Lectures on Early Massachusetts History*, 193.

[2] No. 69278, "Early Court Files," Middlesex "Minute Book" 1752–56, and Records, Superiour Court of Judicature, vol. "1752–53" fol. 126, all in Clerk's Office, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston.

[3] Brother of Cuba. See note, page 201.

Silver Cup, Two Silver Chafing dishes, One Silver Sauee Pan, Three Silver Tankards, Nine Silver Porringers, thirteen Large Silver Spoons, One Silver Puneh Ladle, Twelve Silver Tea Spoons, One pair of Silver Tea tongs One Silver Pepper Box, four Silver Salt Salvers, One Large Silver Plate, Two Silver Canns, Two Silver Candle-Stieks One pair of Silver Snuffers and Snuff Dish two Silver Sweet Meat Spoons, One Silver Spout Cup, One Hundred and thirty three Small Pieces of Silver Coin Two hundred and Eighty Six Copper half penee, & Eight Small Bags being the Goods and Chattels of the said William Brattle and altogether of ye Value of three hundred and fifty pounds Lawful money against the Peaee of ye said Lord the King and the Law of this Provinee in that Case made and Provided.

EDMD TROWBRIDGE, *Attr Dom Rex.*

[*Endorsed*]
This is a True Bill
EPHRAIM JONES *foreman.*

To this Indietment the said William Heley & Robin severally plead guilty

Attr SAML WINTHROP *Cler.*

Robbin Negro on his Examination Taken This 19th of May AD 1752 before Saml Danforth & E. Trowbridge Esqrs. Says That Last Satturday was Seven night abt. Two of ye Cloek in ye night Wm. Healy & I were Coneern'd in Stealing ye Chest of Silver some Time Sinee sd Healey Told me that it was a good Time to get into Coll. Brattles House & Get Something. I told him I was afraid by reason of ye Small Pox he thereupon Told me That he would go into ye house if I would go along with him & I agreeing to it he in ye sd. Saturday Night Came & Awaked me out of my Sleep & we went to Coll Brattles house & he Went into Coll. Brattles Barn & Got a Ladder & Set up agt ye Back of Ye house & Got into ye Back Window and Got Out ye Chest let it down on ye Roof of ye Studdy and delivered it to me on ye Ladder & I held it there Until he got down & then we Carried it Out of ye Gate & Thenee Thro' my master Garden into ye Cornfield & there we got an ax (whieh I Feteh) & he Opend it & I went away for fear of ye Small Pox & when it was

Open'd He Took ye Money Out of ye Chest & then Berried ye Chest in ye field where it lay with ye Plate in it Until ye next Monday Night When we Took ye Plate out & Carried ye Chest away & Berried it in a Ditch in Mr Elleries land & we hid both ye money & plate Under My Masters Barn where it was found. Dick Brattle gave in ye first Information Concerning ye money he Said That there was an Iron Chest in ye Closet in his Masters Chamber yt he Supposed was half full of Money & yt if Wm. Healey Could Carry him off he Could Get him money Enough This Was Soon after Wm. Came to live at my Masters, . . . We Told Toney of it & he Crept Under Ye Barn Flower to hide ye money ye Next Morning after we Stole it but he never had any part of it as I know of but had ye promise of part of it. I took ye money This day & put it in ye place whence I Fetched it & that is ye Same money we Took Out of ye Chest we Took Everything Out of ye Chest but some papers Wm Heley proposed (that when we were ready to go off) to Take My Masters plate but I told him it would not do. No other persons were knowing of ye affair.

Wm. Heley Says That Dick Brattle Told Robbin where his Masters Gold & Silver was & yt his Masters daughter was agoing to be married & if they did not get it Soon it would not be Worth While to meddle With it dick Said there was a Vast deal of Gold & A great Many Rings in a Box in his Misters Chamber yt stood on a desk there & that there was an Iron Chest in ye Closett that was half full of Dollars & Carried Robbin to see ye Chest yt if they were Enoculated he Robin might get it. Last Saturday Night was seven Night Robin & I went into Coll Brattles he went in to ye Barn & got a ladder & set up agt ye Back Side of ye house & opened ye Chamber window got in & Took Out ye Iron Chest & let it down on ye ladder Robbin bought 3 pair of stockins & Two handkerchief with part of ye money one of which Joseph Luke had & also two of ye Dollars Robbin & Toney hid ye Money ye next morning. Robin Opend ye Chest & Took Out ye Money & left ye Plate in ye Chest which he Buried in ye Field, Joseph Luke was knowing of ye design of Stealing ye money abt 3 weeks Since & it was Agreed That Dick Should have half & ye Other was to be divided between Luke Robin & my-

self Luke was not present when the money was Stole, but Come afterwards & demanded his part and Said ye reason he did not help was because he was drunk Robbin & I were with Luke yt Evening before ye money was Stole & drank togeather in Mr. Reed's Yard. I stood by Coll Brattles dore & by ye Gate (while Robbin was entring ye house) to Watch & See that he was not discovered & yt no One was a Comeing.

I took ye Dollars that Were found on me Out of a napkin in Mr. Vassells Little house where there was also Some Coppers yt Toney Brought from Boston in Exchange for Some of ye Dollars yt were stole. The Dollars found on me are part of Coll. Brattles as I suppose & Believe for Robbin Told me he had sent some down by Toney & He Told me he put them in ye napkin & were part of Coll Brattles The Coppers you have are my own & also One of ye Dollars. Our design was to go to Cape Breton & from thence to France.

At his Majesty's superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize and general goal Delivery begun & held at Concord . . . 4 August 1752 . . .

The Court having considered the Offence of the said Wm Heley and Robin, order that each of them be whipt twenty Stripes upon his naked back at the public whiping, and that they pay the sd Wm Brattle trible the value of the Goods stolen (the trible being £786) the goods return'd (being of the value of £214) to be accounted part; and that they pay costs of prosecution standing committed until this Sentence be perform'd.

N.B. in Case the sd Wm Heley & Robin be unable to make restitution or pay the trible Damages ordered that the sd Wm Brattle be & hereby is impower'd to dispose of the sd Wm Heley in Service to any of his Majesty's Subjects for the Term of twenty years, and to dispose of the sd Robin for the Term of his natural Life.

Since nothing more is heard of either of the culprits it is to be supposed that this harsh sentence [1] was duly

[1] Cf. the even more terrible punishment, three years later, of two negroes who had poisoned their master, and who were executed on Cambridge Com-

carried out, and that Henry Vassall was thus deprived of another portion of his fast-disappearing property.

Tony himself, although he plainly hovered on the outskirts of the crime as a willing accessory, seems to have been able to clear his reputation and to maintain his confidential relations with his master. The tie between them was apparently one of real affection. They had been together nearly all their lives, and it needs but a modicum of imagination to fancy the escapades, equine and otherwise, to which the old coachman had been privy. Though the Colonel, as we have seen, probably sold off several of his slaves during the financial stresses of his later years, yet he steadfastly refused to part with Tony. So too Madame Vassall after his death. In her attempts to clear the estate from debts she even sold Cuba and the children [1] to young John Vassall

mon: "Mark, a fellow about 30, was hanged; and Phillis, an old creature, was burnt to death." Winthrop's Diary, September 18, 1755, quoted in Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 217.

[1] As late as a generation ago there was said to be "documentary evidence" that in 1722 she showed her "kindness" by paying £20 to free one of Tony's children from slavery. (*The Cambridge of 1776*, 100.) Since the date is obviously wrong — it should probably be 1772 — we may suspect a further confusion in the statement and assume that under the circumstances the payment was made not by, but to her, and that her object was not so much altruistic as to raise much-needed funds.

Although even in the forced settlement of estates the slaves of New England were generally treated with consideration, a shocking instance of the opposite sort is found in the letters of the Rev. Winwood Serjeant. After the death of his father-in-law, the Rev. Arthur Browne of Portsmouth, N. H., the latter's old serving-man "Jess [? Jesse]" was sold to a planter in the West

across the road (though the actual transfer could have been scarcely more than nominal), but kept Tony on the old place.[1]

In return the slave exhibited a Casabianca-like fidelity. It is not unlikely that when both Vassall families retreated from Cambridge he was left in charge of the combined properties.[2] At all events he hung about the homestead during the eclipse of its former splendor like a kind of dusky human penumbra. His shadowy presence haunts the Burgoyne dinner traditions[3] and appears sharply silhouetted on the inventory of 1778.[4] We also glimpse him at work on the confiscated estate of his mistress's brother at Medford — work which, in his

Indies in 1774. In a frenzy of despair at the separation from all his lifelong associations, the poor creature threw himself overboard on the voyage and perished miserably.

[1] Where he duly appears, *solus*, on the inventory of 1778. (See Appendix B.) It is instructive to notice that he is now entered somewhat hesitatingly as a "negro man," not as a slave, and has no appraised money value as a chattel. Neither does he figure on the actual sale-list of the ensuing auction. Plainly public opinion was setting in the opposite direction. (See note, page 211.)

[2] In August, 1775, a committee appointed to take charge of "such Estates only as may be found without Occupant or possessor," reported that "many of them who are left in possession under pretence of occupants are only negroes or servants &c and that in some instances the Officers Doctors and others belonging to the army have entered upon & taken possession & make waste on s^d Estates." (Mass. Archives, 154/30.) The language here points unmistakably to the Vassall houses, one of which was now in full swing as a hospital and the other as military headquarters.

[3] See *post*.

[4] See Appendix B.

new status of a paid hand, he seems to have valued more highly than his employer did.[1]

"Antony Vassall — 1" is entered, along with "Cato Boardman — 1," on the list of polls in Cambridge for 1777, but is taxed for neither personalty nor realty. The exemption he had cleverly secured by taking up his domicile with his wife and children, who "inhabited a small tenement on Mr. John Vassal's estate and improved a little spot of land of about one and a half acres lying adjacent,"[2] and thus contriving to enjoy a freedom from rents and taxes as well as from bondage.[3]

[1] The accounts of Simon Tufts, "Agent for Isaac Royall, Absentee," include:

1776 Dec. 10	To Toney Mrs. Vassalls Negro	£4.
1777 Jan. 17	To Toney Vassall	4.
Apr. 15	To Toney Vassall's Ballance	1.12.
Jul. 28	To Toney Vassall's full Ballance by Arbitration	0.6.6

[2] "Memorial of Anthony Vassall of Cambridge, a negro man," to the Massachusetts Legislature, 1781. (Mass. Archives, 231/114–15.) The location was evidently "The Farm House East of the Garden," with one and one-half acres and 22 rods, valued in the inventory of 1778 at £243. (Middlesex Probate, 23340, O.S.) On this inventory Cuba and little Darby are plainly identified as "one negro woman of about 40 years of age, one negro boy about 8 years," together with the most recent arrival of all, "another negro child about three months." On reconsideration this last item was struck through with the pen. The above are the only entries of the kind. No values are set against them. (Cf. note, page 209.)

[3] Furthermore, he undoubtedly managed to benefit by the kindly action of the House of Representatives, which, considering that several refugees "have left behind them some of their Families who through Age, Infirmity or other Circumstances are unable to provide for their own Support," resolved "to grant a reasonable Allowance towards the Support & Maintenance of Persons in such Circumstances," and to pay "such reasonable Charges as

When in 1781 the final sale of all confiscated Loyalist property was arranged, he beheld with dismay the vanishing of his peculiar privileges, but determined to take advantage of the anomalous conditions to secure if possible a free title to his diminutive domain. Like any other full-fledged citizen,[1] therefore, he petitioned the Legislature — having "a large family of children to maintain, and being an old man, and his wife, who was of great help to him, being sick" — to have his squatter's rights confirmed by a good title from the state. The friendly hand that drafted the memorial (Tony's own chirographical powers were limited to making his mark — a bold and handsome capital "T") added, not

may have arisen for boarding & supporting such Persons since the Departure of the aforesaid Refugees." (November, 1776.) Mass, Archives, 154/73.

[1] Slavery in Massachusetts, impliedly done away with by the Bill of Rights, received its *coup de grace* in 1781 by the decision in the case of "Quork" Walker *v.* Jennison. One of the earlier decisions leading up to this conclusion, it may be of interest to recall, was a test case (Quincy's Reports, 29 *et seq.*) over another Cambridge slave, "James" Lechmere, undoubtedly a friend of Tony's. Public opinion in New England, long somnolent on the whole subject because of its easy conditions, became aroused during the mid-century; and thereafter, John Adams declares, he never knew a jury render a verdict to the effect that a man was a slave. He cynically adds, however, that the motives for such sentiments were the very reverse of exalted, being, to wit, the selfish opposition of the laboring whites, who, as their numbers increased, determined to oust their unpaid competitors. (*Belknap Papers*, ii, 401. See also Washburn and Moore, already cited, page 204.) As early as 1763, Governor Bernard wrote to the Lords of Trade: "The People here are very much tired of Negro Servants; and It is generally thought that it would be for the public good to discourage their importation, if it was not at present very inconsiderable." Benton, *Early Census Making in Massachusetts*, 55.

without effect, "that though dwelling in a land of freedom, both himself and his wife have spent almost sixty years of their lives in slavery, and that though deprived of what now makes them happy beyond expression yet they have ever lived a life of honesty and been faithful in their master's service," and expressed the hope "that they shall not be denied the sweets of freedom the remainder of their days by being reduced to the painful necessity of begging for bread." On this quaint appeal the good-natured law-makers, perhaps further influenced by the above delicate suggestion that the petitioners otherwise might "come on the town," compromised by ordering that out of the proceeds of the John Vassall sales Tony should be paid the sum of £12, and the same amount annually thereafter from the public funds.[1]

Had we not other proofs that Tony Vassall had absorbed no small share of his former master's financial adroitness, we should be surprised to find that, after such a pitiable account of his poverty, and having

[1] *Mass. Resolves*, 1781, January Session, chap. lxxxi. Such petitions were not uncommon. An extraordinarily flowery appeal from one of Isaac Royall's slaves, "Belinda," born on the Rio da Valta, Africa, received equally favorable action in 1783. (Mass. Archives, 239/12.) This dusky beldame seems to have been a rather notorious source of anxiety to her owner, for in his will he bequeathed to his daughter "my Negro Woman Belinda in case she does not choose her Freedom; if she does choose her Freedom to have it provided she get security that she shall not be a charge to the Town of Medford." Suffolk Probate, 85/535. See note, p. 214.

failed in his ingenious attempt to acquire a home at the public expense, he was able to secure one in the usual manner from his own private means. In 1787 he bought a house and a quarter of an acre of land [1] from Aaron Hill, bricklayer, and four years later a small tract adjoining. In 1793 he acquired from John Foxcroft nearly five acres [2] on the other side of the road (Massachusetts Avenue). His total outlay for these purchases was no less than £152.

The source of this unexpected wealth is one of the most amazing bits of his history. As has been said, he lived during the Revolutionary period with his wife and children on the land of John Vassall, whose property they were. As long as it was possible so to do, he insisted that the cost of their maintenance should stand on the same footing with any other outlays for preserving the confiscated personalty until it should be sold. Of the correctness of this masterly proposition he actually succeeded in convincing the "agent," Farrington, on whose accounts in consequence appears the extraordinary entry:

[1] Middlesex Deeds, 96/84. The title shows that this was the plot formerly owned by Benjamin Cragbone, tanner, who built thereon, about 1766, one of those "little black story and a half houses with gambrel roofs, that saw the row that was going on the 19th of April, '75." (John Holmes, "A Cambridge Robinson Crusoe," in *The City and the Sea*, 20.) The location was near the corner of the present Massachusetts Avenue and Shepard Street. (*The Cambridge of 1776*, 100. See also Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 519.)

[2] Middlesex Deeds, 105/274 and 110/199.

P^d Anthony Vassall for supporting a Negro woman & two Children (3 Years,) belonging to the Estate of s^d [John] Vassall £222.[1]

Cambridge therefore may boast the singular distinction of having possessed a reputable resident who, with neither resources nor backers, achieved by perfectly legal means the supposedly impossible feat of having his cake and eating it too — enjoying for a period of years a commodious dwelling, a garden lot, a devoted spouse, and a family establishment, which not only cost him nothing, but finally netted him a handsome surplus and a government pension.

On his own manor thus ludicrously procured, with his truly valuable helpmeet, "two pigs, a horse, cart and tackling, a boathook, etc.," [2] the old Loyalist coachman dwelt for some thirty years, plying the trade of a "farrier" [3] in an intermittent and desultory fashion which he more than atoned for by the admirable regularity with which he drew his pension. The following pastoral document [4] gives a good example of his craft. That word, indeed, may be taken with a double meaning,

[1] Middlesex Probate, No. 23340, O.S. The transaction was probably modelled on the similar charge by the executor of Isaac Royall "for Supporting Belinda his aged Negro Servant for 3 Years, £30," but, it will be noted, on an enormously inflated capitalization.

[2] Inventory of 1811. Middlesex Probate, No. 23335, Old Series.

[3] He is designated in the records both as "farrier" and as "labourer," and in one case (probably most to his liking) receives the sonorous appellation of "yeoman."

[4] Preserved in a scrap-book at the Cambridge Public Library.

since we have here additional evidence that Tony's commercial methods were of the most advanced order and included the thoroughly modern system of overcharging for everything.

Willm Winthrop Esqr
th1791 To Antony Vassall D^{r}
To keep^{g} Your Horse on hay from
th10 Novr to th13 Jany 1792 being
63 days at 1/6 ℔ day 4.14.6
To triming said Horse 3.
Docking s^{d} Horse 1.6
£4.19.0

after mature Consideration of the above
Acct it appears to me that there is due
to Antony Vassell £2.10.6
EBEN^{R} STEDMAN

[*Endorsed*]
Tony Vassall's Acco^{t}
p^{d} Jan. 12, 1793

January 12 1793 Rec^{d} payment
of the within Accot^{t} which is
in full of all debts dues and
demands whatever

his
ANTONY T VASSALL
mark

Test.
JNO. ALFORD MASON

Like most of his race, Tony was never averse to abandoning the grosser forms of toil for the fine art of conversation; and he delighted to expound to the younger generation the glories of the good old times

before the war. He was famous for his grandiloquent descriptions of the ancient splendors of "the family" and his own Apollo-like magnificence on the box seat of the chariot when they drove to church on Sundays or into Boston for some stately function. Such reminiscences were of course strongly colored by the native foibles of the narrator; it is doubtless, for example, due to his vivid African imagination that the old Vassall house for generations afterwards enjoyed the reputation of being "ha'nted." [1]

In September of 1811, at a fabulous age,[2] Anthony Vassall shuffled off this earthly stage, leaving the faithful Cuba as his chief mourner.[3] Her tears, nevertheless, were not so blinding as to make her lose sight of the

[1] *The Cambridge of 1776*, 100. Such stories naturally lost nothing in the lively fancies of the many young folks who subsequently occupied the mansion. Persons now living can testify to mysterious nocturnal rustlings in the great chamber where Church was confined (see *post*); the negro boy who was pricked to death by Burgoyne's officers (see *post*) "walked" in one of the attic rooms; the ghost of old Governor Belcher (the owner from 1717 to 1719) could be heard tiptoeing along the halls in his squeaky riding-boots; on stormy nights the balls of spectral skittle-players reverberated along the roof.

[2] Given in *Cambridge Vital Records*, ii, 772, as ninety-eight.

[3] Middlesex Probate, No. 23335, O.S. At or soon after this date his heirs seem to have been his daughter Catherine (evidently named for his former master's granddaughter, Miss Russell); Abigail (Hill), widow of James or "Jemmy"; Eliza Flagg, daughter of Cyrus; Flora, widow of "Bristol" Miranda (compare the John Miranda mentioned in Paige, 450); and Darby, described as "the only son." Dorinda, mentioned in the inventory of 1769, had died in 1784. *Cambridge Vital Records*, ii, 772.

"pension." Since by its terms it was not payable to her, she lost no time in applying afresh to the Great and General Court, "at a very advanced period of life and destitute of other regular means of support," praying the legislators "to take pity on her humble state, and seeing the premises, to grant the continuance of the said pension of £12 during the remnant of her life." To enforce her claim she piquantly pointed out that the original annuity was to be paid out of the proceeds of the estate of John Vassall, "on her your petitioner's account, and for her support; as she was, prior to the Revolution, and at the time of the confiscation, the domestic slave and dependent of the said John Vassall, and her said husband was not." Through the good offices of Lemuel Shaw, the Legislature resolved to accede to her request and continue her little dole, now represented by $40, "until further order of this Court." [1] The last clause evinced an almost needless precaution. The old crone claimed her pittance but one year more.[2]

[1] Mass. Resolves of 1811–12, chap. cliv, and accompanying papers: "Petition of Cuby Vassall," approved Feb. 28, 1812 by her fellow-townsman Gov. Gerry. See Judge Shaw's reminiscences of the matter in *Mass. Hist. Society's Proceedings, 1st Series*, iv, 66.

[2] Her age is given as seventy-eight. As in her husband's case, consumption was the immediate cause of death. (*Cambridge Vital Records*, ii, 772.) Both were buried from the First Parish, of which they were doubtless members, Christ Church at this period being closed.

Darby, the best-remembered child of the couple, was born, if his own statement [1] is to be relied on, in May of 1769, beneath the roof of John Vassall, who had already purchased the mother Cuba, and thus become entitled to her offspring. At a tender age he was "given" to George Reed of South Woburn, a recent convert to Episcopalianism and one of the group who from that distant township occasionally attended Christ Church, Cambridge.[2] That worthy patriot, when the Revolution broke out, threw to the winds his half-assimilated Church of England principles, joined the provincial forces, marched to Bunker Hill, was there stricken by "a surfeit or heat," and in a few days expired.[3]

Little Darby thereupon wandered back to Cambridge,

[1] Hoppin MS. (see note, page 200). Cf Darby's own deposition in Suffolk Deeds, 387/122.

[2] See Sewall, *History of Woburn*, 500. The Reeds were considerable slaveholders (Johnson, *Woburn Deaths*, 154) and made a specialty of getting their stock very young. In a case parallel to Darby's, "Venus" was given to Swithin Reed while she was so tiny that she was brought from Boston in a saddlebag. (Curtis, *Ye Olde Meeting House*, 61.) A "nigger baby" in fact, among the well-to-do of those days, was a favorite and frequent gift. Many slaveholders regarded their property's offspring as troublesome incumbrances and "gave them away like puppies," or, in default of ready recipients, advertised them with a cash bonus to the taker. (Moore, *History of Slavery in Mass.*, 57, quoting Belknap. See also Washburn, *ubi supra*, 216.) As late as 1779 "Cato," son of "Violet," was sold at the age of six. See Littleton *v.* Tuttle, a note to the case of Winchendon *v.* Hatfield (4 *Mass. Reports*, 128), relating to the fortunes of "Edom London," who in nineteen years changed masters no less than eleven times, besides twice enlisting in the Continental Army.

[3] Sewall, *History of Woburn*, 573, *n.*

only to find his first master as effectually beyond recall as his second. To fill the gap a third was unexpectedly offered in no less a personage than George Washington himself. For when the General arrived at his permanent headquarters in the abandoned John Vassall house, he found the youngster (so the story runs) disconsolately swinging on the gate. The Virginia planter, who had handled slaves all his life, good-naturedly proposed to take the boy into his service. What must have been his astonishment when the pickaninny coolly inquired as to the rate of compensation. Such a left-handed manifestation of the new and much vaunted "spirit of liberty" was not at all to the taste of the Commander-in-chief, and his emphatic remarks on the subject caused Darby Vassall to declare to the day of his death that "General Washington was no gentleman, to expect a boy to work without wages." [1]

Further details of his youthful days are lacking, except his own statement that he was brought up a Congregationalist — not surprising in view of the almost total extinction of the doctrines of England, religious as well as political, in his neighborhood. Following the general seaward migration of the negroes after the Revolution, he left his parents in Cambridge and drifted

[1] *New England Hist. Gen. Register*, xxv, 44, where by obvious error the anecdote is assigned to old Tony.

into Boston. In the metropolis he soon did sufficiently well to buy, with his brother Cyrus, a little house on May Street.[1] He married Lucy Holland in 1802, and had several children.[2] Inheriting, as it were, a certain gentility in his humble station, he was employed by some of the best old families of Boston — the Shaws, the Curtises, etc. — and plainly won their friendship and esteem.[3] His prosperity enabled him, after the death of his father Tony, to buy out the interests of all the other heirs to the Cambridge property, at a cost of $620,[4] and in 1827 to build another house on the land.[5]

The death of his wife the following year probably marks the turning of his good fortune's tide. One by one, also, his children dropped away, in almost every case from consumption. Brother Cyrus had long ago passed over Jordan.[6] As old age crept on, Darby fell

[1] 1796. Suffolk Deeds, 183/79 *et passim*. He is therein described as a "laborer." His other brother, James, meantime became a "hairdresser." May Street is now Revere Street.

[2] Harris, *Vassals of New England*, 13, *n*. *Boston Birth Records, 1810–1849, passim*.

[3] In 1824 he was living in the household of the wealthy Samuel Brown of Boston, who had evidently befriended him for years, and who by will not only left him wearing apparel, fuel and provisions, but also released him from a mortgage of two thousand dollars on the May Street property, given in 1807 to cover the expense of erecting a "New Brick mansion house" thereon. Suffolk Probate, 123/615. Suffolk Deeds, 220/276.

[4] December 24, 1813. Middlesex Probate, 23335, Old Series.

[5] Middlesex Deeds, 279/411.

[6] *Boston Death Records, passim*, where are also set down, at this period, a considerable number of deaths of other "colored people" bearing the Vas-

upon evil times, was forced first to mortgage and then to sell his little freeholds,[1] and finally to resort to the charity of the Brattle Square Church in Boston, of which he had long been a member. There he became a picturesque and rather noted figure. Scrupulously observing the conventions of the olden time, Sunday by Sunday he toiled up to the abandoned slaves' gallery, or "nigger loft," over the organ, until his pathetic solitude proved too much for the tender-hearted pastor, Dr. Lothrop, and he was given a comfortable seat near the pulpit. His greatest pleasure was a formal call upon the minister, who always received him as deferentially as if he had been a stranger of distinction.[2]

The old fellow's most cherished possession was what he termed his "pass," dated 1843 and signed by Miss Catherine Russell,[3] the granddaughter of Henry Vassall. This grisly document, which would have delighted the heart of "Old Mortality," guaranteed him admis-

sall patronymic — doubtless the remnants of the households of John, William, and other relatives of Colonel Henry. See also *Cambridge Vital Records*, ii, 772.

[1] Middlesex Deeds, 294/248, etc.

[2] Memoir of Lothrop, by Dr. A. P. Peabody. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, 2d Series*, iii, 169.

[3] She died in 1847 and was buried in the family tomb under Christ Church. Harris, *Vassals of New England*, 22. A letter from this biographer, dated 1862 and preserved in the church files, gives, along with other details of this matter, a copy of the "pass." It extended the privilege also to the members of Darby's family, consisting, at its date, of a daughter and two grandchildren. All apparently predeceased him.

sion to no worldly dignity or mundane privilege, but to a place after death in the vault beside the mouldering bones of the proud old "family" of which he still counted himself a member. He would frequently make a Sunday pilgrimage to Christ Church to assure himself that his precious prospective domicile was *in statu quo*, and when present he always attended the Communion. One of the most touching sights of the mid-century in Cambridge was to see this octogenarian representative of "the constant service of the antique world" deferentially waiting till all the white "quality" had partaken, and then creeping forward in lonely humility to receive the Sacrament.

'T is ended now, the sacred feast;
  Yet on the chancel stair
For whom awaits the white-robed priest?
  Who still remains to share
The broken body of his Lord,
  To drink the crimson tide
For us to-day as freely poured
  As erst from Jesus' side?

'T is he, our brother — in the view
  Of Him who died to free
His children, of whatever hue,
  From sin's captivity.
Not to the children's board he comes,
  Nor drinks the children's cup,
But meekly feeds him on the crumbs
  The dogs may gather up.

Ne'er may the Ethiop's dusky skin
  A lighter shade attain,
But One can cleanse the heart within
  From sin's corroding stain.

Foremost on earth we taste the bliss
  Our Banquet here supplies,
Nor know what station shall be his
  When feasting in the skies.
  SAMUEL BATCHELDER, JR., *circa* 1856.

Finally, at the venerable age of ninety-two, Darby Vassall was accorded the honor he had so long anticipated, and under circumstances of solemnity and publicity which he never could have dared to picture in his fondest dreams. On the afternoon of October 15, 1861, the old slave was duly interred in the Vassall tomb. The service took place precisely one hundred years from the day the church was formally dedicated under the auspices of his father's master, and in the midst of the elaborate observances marking that centennial; during the first feverish excitement, too, of that titanic struggle that was to abolish all slavery. Such a combination of circumstances made the poor negro's funeral a memorable occasion.[1] Among the notable gathering were such well-known medical men as Morrill Wyman and Oliver Wendell Holmes, for the opportunity was taken to examine and identify the remains already in the vault.[2]

[1] See the *Boston Traveller*, October 16, 1861; *Cambridge Chronicle*, October 19, 1861, etc.

[2] "The vault contained nine coffins. The upper one of a row of three on the north side contained as indicated by the plate the remains of Catherine Graves Russell, died Sep. 5, 1847. The one below it, somewhat decayed, contained the remains of a woman, supposed to be the wife of Colonel Vassall, died in 1800. The lower coffin held the remains of a man, doubtless Colonel

Soon afterward, by order of the city authorities, it was permanently sealed,[1] and with it the last chapter in the story of Henry Vassall.

Vassall, its appearance and position seeming to indicate its priority in the vault. On the south side were the coffins of four young children and two adults. Of the four, all were considerably broken and decayed. Scarcely any remains were perceivable — merely a few detached bones. The largest might have been that of a child two years old, and was in the best preservation. The one that seemed to be the oldest was marked with nail-heads 'E.R., BORN & DIED JAN. 27, 1770' . . . In this coffin were noticed a number of cherry stones, the kernels eaten out by some mouse which had carried them thither, secure of a safe retreat. The upper of the two large coffins on which these small ones rested contained the bones of a man over forty-five years of age. The lower limbs were covered thick with hay, seeming to indicate transportation. No clue was obtained to the person of the occupant. [Undoubtedly Lieutenant Brown. See *post*.] The remains in the lower coffin were supposed to be those of Mrs. Russell, wife of Dr. Charles Russell, died in 1802." Harris, *Vassalls of New England*, 13, *n*.

[1] After discussing the question at several meetings, the parish, to avoid possible legal complications with the descendants of the owners of the tomb, petitioned the Cambridge aldermen, and obtained from them an order dated April 5, 1865, that it should be "permanently closed." The entrance at the west end was bricked up, a slate slab placed against it bearing the original proprietor's name (misspelled), the stone steps which led down to it were removed, and the slope filled in level with the rest of the cellar floor. Parish Records, vol. 2, *passim*, especially page 294.

APPENDIX A

[*From Middlesex Probate Files, No. 23336, Old Series*]

Inventory of the Real & Personnall Estate belonging to Henry Vassall late of Cambridge Esqr Deceas'd —

House Lands Stables &c	£1000	0	0
In the Best Room			
1 Large pier Glass £5. 2 Sconce Ditto 6.6.8 2 Large & 6 small Chairs £3 Jappan Tea Table 12/	14	18	8
3 Family Pictures £3. Nine Enameld Cups & Saucers 6 Coffe Cups Bowl &c. on the Tea Table £1	4	0	0
In the Clositt			
11 China Dishes 27 Enameld plates 4 Burnt China 6 Bowls & plates 6 Images 2 China Mugs 2 Class Cups 5 Beer Glass 1 Salver 1 pair Branch Candlestieks 1 Doz^{n} Wash Hand Glasses 6 Saucers pick'd 23 Glass Bucketts 15 Wine Glasses 2 Doz^{n} Jelly Ditto 1 Tray 2 Decanter	9	7	8
In the Boffatt			
3 China Bowls 13 China plates 2 Dishes China Tray 7 Cups & Saucers Wash Hand Bason Glass Salver	4	8	8
Turkey Carpett	1	6	8
In the Blue Room			
1 Seonce £5 2 large & 4 small Chairs £2.8 1 Tea Table belongs to Mrs. Russell £1.10	8	18	0
1 Round Table 6/8 Brass And Irons 10/	0	16	8
In the Clositt			
40 plates some broke of Different China £2.13.4 2 Doz^{n} & ½ Blue & White China £1.12	4	5	4
4 pickled plates 5/ 2 Delph Fruit Basketts 4/ 2 Stone Ditto 4/ 3 Delph punch Bowls 8/ 4 China 3 Broke 17/4	1	18	4
Glasses in ye Clositt £1.6.8 Baskett 5/ 3 Scollop Shells 4/ 3 China Dishes one broke 12/	2	7	8

In the Boffatt

1 Doz^{n} China plates £1.6.8 punch Bowl 13/4 Stone Turine & Dish 8/ Stone pickled pott 6/	2	14	0
1 Doz^{n} Large & Small Blue & White China Dishes £2 Glass in ye Boffatt 18/ Jappan Salver 2/8 Grotto 4/	3	4	8

In the Keeping Room

2 Sconce Glasses £3.6.8 Marble Table £2.13.4 One large & one small mehogny Table £2.....	8	0	0
2 Round Straw Bottom'd Chairs 6/8 Eight Old Leather Bottom'd Chairs £1.4 Mr Sherly picture 2/8	1	13	4
Rum Case 10/ And Irons Shovel & Tongs 14/8 pair of Large Tongs 6/8 prospective Glass 8/	1	19	4
Old Carpit 4/ Old Plate & Knife Baskett with 6 Buck handled Knives & forks 6/	0	10	0

In the Clositt

9 Stone Dishes 8/ Doz^{n} Stone plates 6/ Jelly Glasses 1/ Ten Wine Glasses & Baskett 6/8 Earthen pitcher 1/	1	2	8
parcel Broken Glass & China mended 4/ Tobacco Tongs /8 hatchet & mallet for Sugar /6 small Scive /2	0	5	4
Glass musturd pott 1/4 Glass for Vinegar & Oyl /4 3 Salts 1/4 Cork puiler /4 Glass Candlestick & Delph Bowl 1/6 .	0	4	10
Cloaths Brush 1/ small Decanter 2/ 14 China Plates £1 .	1	3	0

In the Little Entry

6 Leather Bucketts 1 Glass Lanthorn £1.15	1	15	0

In the Little Room

Old Sconce Glass £1.16 Doz^{n} Candle moulds £1 three Guns £3 silver hilted sword £2	7	16	0
Mourning Sword 5/ Hanger 18/ Red Housing 8/ small Dish 8/ Checquer Board 3/	2	2	0
Case of Mathamatical Instruments 8/ Shaving Box & Rasors 6/ Tools & Broken thing in ye Clositt 8/	1	2	0

In the Kitchen

Copper Stew pan £1.4 Dutch Oven £1 Four large & small Bell mettled Skillets £1.10.....	3	14	0
Old Copper Ladle 4/ Fish Kittle Old 12/ Two Copper potts for meat £2.10 Four Iron 2 large 2 small 6/	3	12	0

2 Iron Skillets 2/ Two Iron Dish Kittles 1/4 Iron Tea Kittle one old Copper one 6/ three Grind Irons 10/	0	19	4
2 Frying pans 8/ Toast Iron 1/4 Chaffing Dish 1/ three And Irons 8/ Fender /8 Tongs & peal 4/	1	3	0
Jack £2.8 2 large spits 8/ small Ditto 1/ Six Broken Brass Candlestieks 7/ Flower Box 1/ Lamp 3/	3	8	0
Coffa pott 5/ three Tin Dish & One plate Cover 4/ Tin Graters 1/ Seales & Weights £1	1	10	0
plate Rack 3/ Old Table 3/ Tin Fender 12/ Six Old Straw bottom'd Chairs /8 Iron Spider 2/ Rolingpin 1/	1	9	0
Marble morter 15/ Seven Trammels 7/ Copper Fountain £1.8 Eight Cloaths Basketts 18/	3	8	0
Tin Ginger bread & other pans 3/6 2 Trays & Meal Trough 3/ Meal Chest 4/ 2 pair Flat Irons Old 1/	0	11	6
Iron Box & 3 Grates 1/6 4 Old Chairs 1/ And Irons & Tongs 6/ Old Bedstead & Table leaves 12/	1	0	6
In The Marble Chamber			
Blue Harrateen Bed & Curtains £2.8 Easy Chairs £1.16 six setting Chairs £4.16	9	0	0
Dressing Table belongs to Mrs Russell			
Dressing Glass £1.4 three Cushings for Windows 12/ 3 Glass Lamps £1.10 2 Carpitts 16/	4	2	0
Feather Bed Bolster & pillows 53 @ 1/6 is £4 Bedstead 6/ 8 pair Blanketts £4.6.8	8	12	8
4 Rugs £1.10 Small Feather Bed 60 lb £3.6.8	4	16	8
In the Green Chamber			
Green Harrateen Bed & Curtains £1.8 Old Easy Chair 6/ six setting Chairs £2.8 Dressing Table 16/	4	18	0
Dressing Glass 18/ Feather Bed Bolster & pillows 60 lb £3.12 Bedstead £1 small Table 5/ And Irons 4/	5	19	0
In the Cader Chamber			
Green Harrateen Bed & Curtains Old 12/ 2 mehogony Desks £4.10 Medicine Box 12/ Table £1.4	6	18	0
Feather Bed Bolster & pillows 60 lb £4 Mattrass Bed 12/ Bedstead 12/ Large Trunk 12/ 3 old Chairs 8/	6	4	0
6 Old Carpetts 12/ portmantle Trunk 10/ small Seales & Weights 16/ Counterpin £1.4/	3	2	0
Wash Hand Bason & Chamber pott	0	0	1

In the Little Chamber

Old Linnin Bed & Curtains 8/ Bed Bolster & pillows 50 ld £3.6.8 Bedstead 6/ 2 Old Chairs 2/ Trunk 12/	4	14	8
Allarbaster Image 1/6 small Looking Glass 4/ Great Chair 8/ 6 Cushions 9/ 4 Stone Chamber potts 1/	1	3	6

In the Entry Chamber

Small Bed Bolster & pillow £2.5 Bedstead 6/	2	11	0

In the Kitchen Chamber

Bedstead 12/ 2 Feather Beds Bolsters 1 pillow 112 ld £6.10 Old Desk & Book Case £1.10 Old Desk 6/	8	18	0
Old Dressing Table 10/ 4 old Chairs 1/4 small Looking Glass 3/ pair Dogs 3/ Old Tongs & Shovel 2/8 Warming pan 5/	1	5	0

In the Entry

Mehogony Table £1.4 34 Great & small pictures £1.14 ...	2	18	0

On the Stair Case

33 Great & small Glass pictures £2.8 51 Great & small pictures £6	8	8	0

In the Chamber Entry

28 Great & small pictures £1.12.6	1	12	6
22 Damask Table Cloath @ 10/8 is £11.14.8 16 Old & Other Damask Napkins @ 2/ is £1.12	13	6	8
12 Diaper Napkins @ 1/6 is 18/ 12 Old Diaper Table Cloaths £1.10 9 pair old Holland Sheets @ 13/4 is £6	8	8	0
2 pair of small Holland Sheets @ 12/ is £1.4 3 pair & one Sheet old @ 16/ is £2.16	4	0	0
2 pair of New Cotton Linnen Sheats @ 10/ is £1 2 pair & small Ditto @ 8/4 is £1.5	2	5	0
3 pair of Old Cotton Linnin Ditto £1.10 24 old pillow Cases 8/	1	18	0
Best pewter 105 ld @ 1/6 is £7.17.6 Old pewter 70 ld @ 1/ is £3.10	11	7	6
4 Brass Kittles 90 ld £4.17.2	4	17	2
Crimson Velvett Furnature for Horse £6 Green Ditto Cloath old £1.4 Saddle 18/	8	2	0

In the Stable

pair of Horses Old £12 Coach with Harness £12 Chariott £50 Chaise with Harness £5.6.8	79	6	8
Old Harness 3/ Currieles Carrage 12/ Chaise Body 12/ Old Chaise Body 6/ Old Curriele Harness 6/	1	19	0
2 pair of Old Holsters 1/6 Garden Enjine Hose £1.4 Old Wheels for ye Coach £1.4	2	9	6
pair Joints 1/ Cross Cutt Saw 8/ 2 Old Saddles 4/ Old Saddle 4/	0	17	0

In the Celler

Large Copper £8 2 Iron Trivetts 9/ 6 Old Wash Tubs 3/ Dumb Betty 1/ 2 Cyder Barr^ls 4/ sundry Cract & Broke stone potts on ye Stair way 5/ 1 Gross of Bottles in sorts £1.6.8	1	11	8
1 Case of Large Bottles £1.12 52 Bottles Great & small with Old Cases 15/ 3 Juggs & Jarr 13/	3	0	0
Copper Funnell £1.10 Whole & Broken Juggs 4/ 9 Doz^n & ½ Quart Bottles £1	2	14	0
14 Old Cask £1.4 Sand Bin 8/	1	12	0

Servants

Tony £13.6.8 Dick £6.13.4 James £40	60	0	0
Dorrenda £12 Auber [? Cuba] £20	32	0	0
Servants Beds & Beding £1.12	1	12	0
Rolling Stone & Garden Tools £1.4 6 Old Chairs in ye Summer House 8/	1	12	0

Plate

2 Cans 2 salt spoons 24 oz Ounces Tankerd 34 oz 2 Butler Cups 16½ small Salver 5 oz Candlestick 21½ oz Coffa pott 46 oz Tea-pott 19 oz 4 Salts 10½ Cream pott 5¾ Tea Kittle 43 oz stand for Ditto 23¾ Chaffing Dish 24½ Chaffing Dish 21½ 2 porringers 19¼ 6 spoons 14 Salver 16 3 Large & 1 Small spoon 17¼ punch strainer 5 Snuffers & Stand 2 small salt spoons Tea Finger 11½ stand with Casters 61¼ 1 Doz^n Tea spoons & strainer 6 small Ditto pepper Box punch Ladle large spoon 15^oz porringer 4 spoons 17 oz 1 Doz Desert spoons & Forks 32 oz Handles for Desert Knives 15 oz 1 Doz Great spoons ye Handles for Knives & Forks 76½ oz Marrow spoon 1 Ounc & ½

The Amount of the whole plate is Six Hundred Ounces @ 6/8 oz ..... is	200	0	0
Case for Knives & Forks £3.6.8 2 Glass Cruett & Salts 6/ Case for ye Desert Knives & Forks £1.10	5	2	8
Case of Desert Knives & Forks £1.8 Calabash Tipt with Silver 3/ Gold Whater £13.6.8 5 Labels 4/	15	1	8
1 pair of Horse Nitts £2 1 Hammock £1.8 Carpett £1.10 Old Knive & Fork 7 Ounces @ 6/8 £2.6.6	7	4	6
	£1671	2	3

Books [1]

Chambers Dict: 2 Vols £2 Bailey Ditto 6/8 Hist. of Religion 2 Vols 18/ Tacitus Eng^d 2 Vols 8/	3	12	8
Pridieux Connect: 2 Vol 18/ Trial of ye Earl of Macelesfield 2/ Tillotsons Sermons 3 vol 12/	1	12	0
Survey of ye Globe 1/4 Bentivollio & Urinia province Laws Tempcry Ditto Grotius Countess pembroke 4/	0	5	4
Bible 6/ Collect of Voyages 4 Vols. £1 Quincy Dispensatory 4/ Method with ye Deist 2/ Gents Instruct^r 2/	1	14	0
Hist of Wm Stevens 1/6 5 Vol Clarendon Hist. of ye Rebellion first missing 5/ Lock on Human Understanding 8/	0	14	6
Vindication of ye Deffence of Xanity 2 Vol 6/8 Short way Teaching ye Languages /8 5 Vols Roman His by Eachad 5/	0	12	4
pridiaux Life of Mahomet 1/ Bulls Sermons 4 Vols 4/ Bland Disapline 1/ Hist Revolution of portugal 1/6	0	6	6
Hamilton Acct of East Ind: 2 Vol 3/ Life of Marlbro 2 Vol 12/ 1.3. & 4 Vol Rollin Bell Lett 5/ Dio Xian Rit 12/ ..	1	2	0
Nature Display^d 3 Vol 8/ Hist of ye Turks 4 Vol 12/ Shaftbury Char: 3 Vol 12/ Hist of China 4 Vol 12/	2	4	0
The Prater. 1/6 Tatler 4 Vol 8/ Conduct of Married Life 3/4 Modern Travels 4 Vol 10/8 Swift Works 13 Vol £1.....	2	3	6
Lydia 4 Vol 4/ Robinson Crusoe 2 Vol 2/ Comical Hist 2 Vol. 2/8 Joshua Truman 2 Vol 2/8	0	11	4

[1] Several of these books were contributed by Mrs. Vassall from the much smaller library of her father, Isaac Royall, Senior. See his inventory of 1741, Middlesex Probate, 19545, Old Series, where the prices rule far higher — but partly because then figured in "Old Tenor." Henry Vassall added to his shelves from time to time: "1758 Jany 9th. Cash p^d Books £9.10."

Mirza & Fatima 1/4 Friends 2 Vol 4/ Betsy Thoughtless 4 Vol 4/ Sr Chas Goodville 2 Vol 3/ Hap Orph^n 2/8	0	15	0
New Attalantis 4 Vol 8/ Miss Cadiero 4 Vol 5/ Don Quixote 5 Vol 5/ Cassandra 4 Vol 5/ Vade Mecom 1/	1	4	0
Life of Mr Anderson 4/ Whicherly plays 3/ Bishop of London Sermons 2 Vol 5/ Du Clos Maners of ye Age 4/	0	16	0
Valet 2 Vol 4/8 Memors of Man of Quality 2 Vol 3/ West Deffence of ye Resurrection 2/ Shakspear Work 10/8 Vol	0	19	8
Turkish Spy 7 Vol 14/ Speet [? Spectator] 8 Vol £1 Guardian 2 Vol 5/ Rollan Anch^t Hist 10 Vol £1.4.....	3	3	0
Free Holder 1/6 Anti Gallican 3/ Travel of Cyrus 2/ Cleopatra 8 Vol 16/ Stage Coach 1/	1	3	6
Betsy Barns 4/8 Conver^n Moral Enter: 1/6 Fortunate Country Maid 2 Vol 4/8 Life of Cleavland 9/4	1	0	2
Mrs Bhen plays 4 Vol 6/ Agreable Ugliness 1/ Hist of Pilgram 2/8 Venetian Tales 1/ Ecep^d Gaz^r 1/	0	11	8
Miramega 2/7 Gays Fables 3/ Chas Osberns Esqr 1/6 Telemachus 3/ Tales of ye Faries 8/.....	0	18	1
Love Letters 1/4 Hayward Nov^ls 4 Vol 4/ Otway plays 4/ Wm Bingfield 2/	0	11	4
Lord Landown Works 3 Vol 5/ Hist of Scot Family /6 Rigester 1756/6 Chyne English Malady 4/ Roderick Random 3 Vol. 3/	0	13	0
True Merit True Happiness 2 Vol 4/ Female Quixote 2 Vol 4/8 Persian Tales 3 Vol 6/ Hist of Young Lady of Distin 2 vol 4/	0	18	8
Joseph Andrews 2 Vol 4/ Lovers 1/ Peter Wilkins 2 Vol 5/ Lucy Villiers 2 Vol 5/ Amelia 4 Vol 10/ Farqhur play 2 Vol 4/	1	9	0
Modern Adventures 2 Vol 5/ 1. 2 4 & 5 vol of David Simple 11/ Chinese Tales 2^d vol 1/ Dicky Gotham & Doll Clod 2^d Vol 2/	0	19	0
Adven^t of Count Fathom 1^t Vol 2/ Congreave plays 3 Vol 4/ 1^t vol of Persian Letters 1/4 Ditto of Telemichus 3/ ...	0	10	4
Adventures of Capt Greenland 4 Vol 9/4 1. & 3 Vol. of Pervian Tales 2/8 Select Novals 9 Vol 6/ Humerest 1^t Vol. 1/	0	19	0
1^t Vol of mogul Tales 1/ Ditto of Select Novels 1/ 2^d vol of popes Works 1/ Scotch Marine /6 2^d Vol of ye Parish Girl 4/	0	7	6
Iack Conner 2 Vol 4/ Harriet Stewart 2 Vol 4/ 2^d Vol Female Foundling 1/6 1 & 2 Vol Le Bell Assembly 2/8....	0	12	2

1 & 3 Vol Religious Philosopher 4/ 2d Vol of Ditto 1/ 1t Vol of Canterbury Tales 2/ Bradley Compleat Body Husbandry 3/	0	10	0
1t Vol of Mortaines Art of Husbandry 1/ Ditto of Luis 14th 2/ 7th Vol Life of Queen Ann 2/ Bradly Anclt Husbandry 2/	0	7	0
1t vol of Modern Husbandry 1/ 2d vol Hist of Jews 1/ 2d vol Epistle for Ladys 2/ Life of St Ignatius /2 Shirlock on Death 1/	0	5	2
Compleat French Master 1/ Hist of ye World 1/ present state of Britain 1/ Ditto 1/ Telemachus French /6	0	4	6
Crofllin Anamadversions on ye Talmud /1 Adventures of Gile Blas 4 Vol. 5/ 1.2.3. & 6 Vol Arabian Nights Enter 4/	0	9	1
Adventures of Mr Lovel 2/ Leonora Female Quixote & Otway broken Voll 2/	0	4	0
	£1705	11	3

We the Subscribers Appointed by the Honble Saml Danforth have Appriz'd the Above Inventory belonging to the sd Henry Vassall Esqr Decea'd

Septr. 8. 1769. Dr Russel (one of the adminrs) exhibited the foregoing Inventory on Oath Septr 30th 1769 Mrs Penelope Vassel the other administr made oath to the same Inventory —

S. Danforth J. prob.

Henry Prentice
Ebens Stedman
Ebenezr Bradish
all sworn before the Judge

APPENDIX B

[From Middlesex Probate Files, No. 23342, Old Series]

Middlesex ss

An Inventory of the Personal Estate whereof Penelope Vassall Late of Cambridge In the County of Middlesex who fled from her Habitation to the Enemies of this State: was Seisd in the aforsd County, taken by us the Subscribers Appointed By the Hon^{bl} John Winthrop Esq Judge of Probate of wills &c for Said County as the Same was Shewn us by William How appointed Agent to the Same Estate by the aforsd Judge

to one Chariot £100 one Iron Barr 37/	101″ 17″ 0
one pair Large handirons 52/ one Small Do 34/	4″ 6″ 0
one trivit 58/ Some old harnis 24/	4″ 2″ 0
one pair Shears 12/ oldiron 36/ one Box 24/	3″ 12″ 0
one wicker Basket 12/ one hamper with lumber 10/	1″ 2″ 0
one tinn fender 60/ two old Sashes £5	8″ 0″ 0
three bee hives 30/ two Buckets 36/.....	3″ 6″ 0
five Canvis pictures 90/ fifteen Large Do. £6.15	11″ 5″ 0
Eighteen D° N° 2 72/ thirteen D° N° 3 40/	5″ 12″ 0
Sixteen Small Do 40/ four Glass D° 48/.....	4″ 8″ 0
nineteen gilt D° 76/ one Glass Lanthorn 45.....	6″ 1″ 0
one marble table £9 one plate grate 48/	11″ 8″ 0
two Large Canisters 12/ part of two Cariges £24	24″ 12″ 0
one Churn 18/ one Large picture 20/	1″ 18″ 0
one negro man Named toney	

Cambridge June ye 24. 1778

Aaron Hill
Wm Gamage
Thos Barrett

Middlesex 11 Jany 1779 Exhibited upon Oath by the Agent William Howe.
before me J Winthrop J. Prob —

III

THE WASHINGTON ELM TRADITION

Introductory Note

The famous Washington Elm, standing in the middle of Garden Street at its junction with Mason Street, was the first of a line of six magnificent elms planted along Garden Street, the westerly border of the "Cow Commons," about 1700. The second stood at the corner of the present Waterhouse Street, and was early noted as the "Whitefield Elm," from the fact that the great revivalist preached some of his soul-shaking sermons beneath its shade in 1740. It obstructed the way and was cut down in 1871.[1] The third stood at the corner of the present Concord Avenue, and the fourth opposite the present Walker Street. The fifth, just inside the fence between the present Houghton and Parsons estates, was long known as the "Stone Elm," from Gregory Stone, the early owner of the property; its maimed stump has survived all its fellows. The sixth stood opposite the present Linnaean Street, on which the line, turning at

[1] 1855, the date given on page 48 of *The Cambridge of 1896*, seems to be an error — perhaps refers to some other tree in the line.

THE WASHINGTON ELM

right angles, seems to have continued along the northern border of the "Commons," as indicated by several other massive trunks.

For many years the Washington Elm had been slowly dying, deprived of almost all moisture by the water-tight paving of the street around it and by the lowering of the subterranean "water table" through the construction of sewers, etc., which also cut seriously into its roots. As early as 1874, S. A. Drake alludes to "its crippled branches swathed in bandages; its scars where, after holding aloft for a century their outstretched arms, limb after limb has fallen nerveless and decayed." [1] Like an ancient martyr, the more it suffered the more famous it became. Desperate if somewhat unintelligent efforts were made to preserve it by the city authorities. More and more dead branches were cut off, the wounds smeared with tar, the hollows filled with cement, the remaining limbs braced with iron bands and rods, until it became a truly pitiable object.

Finally, on October 26, 1923, the whole wretched ruin was accidently pulled over by workmen trying to remove another dead branch, and crashed against the iron railing surrounding it. Examination showed that the trunk was hopelessly rotted below the ground, a mere mass of punk: the wonder was that it had stood so long.

[1] *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex*, 267.

Experts from the Bussey Institution counted two hundred and two annual rings in a section of its trunk; so that allowing for the last few years when growth had evidently ceased entirely it must have been at least two hundred and ten years old.

The remains of the famous relic were rescued with some difficulty from a horde of souvenir hunters and taken in charge by the city government. It was determined to make of them "an object lesson in patriotism for the whole country." To this end they were sawn into numerous fragments. A large piece of the main trunk was sent to the governor of each of the forty-eight states, and the section from which the rings were counted was polished and presented to the museum at Mt. Vernon. From the smaller branches were made a quantity of gavels, two of which were presented to the legislative bodies of each state and many to fraternal organizations, etc. One hundred and fifty small blocks of the wood were given to local applicants, thirty-two to various counties, and two hundred and fifty were sent out over the country. In all about one thousand pieces were distributed, each suitably labeled with a metal plaque.

The granite tablet that had stood at the foot of the Elm bore the inscription—said to be from the pen of Henry W. Longfellow:

UNDER THIS TREE
WASHINGTON
FIRST TOOK COMMAND
OF THE
AMERICAN ARMY
JULY 3D, 1775

This tablet was perforce removed; but on the same spot a bronze inscription was set in a circular panel of cement, flush with the street surface:

HERE STOOD
THE WASHINGTON ELM
UNDER WHICH
GEORGE WASHINGTON
TOOK COMMAND OF
THE AMERICAN ARMY
JULY 3 1775

On July 3, 1925, a grand civic celebration preceded by a long parade was held on the Common close by the site of the Elm to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the above momentous event. The exercises included a speech by the President of the United States,[1] and a "pageant" representing the original ceremony as popularly understood.

[1] It was remarked that the President in his address made no reference to the Elm.

After all these tokens of veneration, extending over so many years, it may be presumptuous — even profane — to question the tradition on which they have been based; yet if we lay aside the trusting spirit in which we have always accepted it, and consider it in the light of common sense and everyday experience, it appears so odd and unlikely that we are tempted to ask: Is it true?

It is only the restless iconoclasts, to be sure, that dare to propound such a question. Most of us have no wish to examine the tradition critically. Mental inertia (as in so many other cases) is primarily to blame. Every old Cantabrigian has been brought up on the story, and that is enough. The more often it is repeated the more firmly it is believed. To upset it would be as painful a shock to our historic equilibrium as to declare the truth that the Declaration of Independence was not signed on the Fourth of July. Besides, the fame of the Elm has spread over the whole country, so that it formed the best "sure-fire" attraction in town for every visitor. To discredit it would in a manner impugn the good faith of the city. Lastly, some of us devoutly believe the tradition has been handed down in an unbroken chain from heroic Revolutionary sires. To disbelieve it would somehow be not only unpatriotic but unfilial. Washington's Elm in short is as much an accepted part of American history as his cherry tree, or the dollar that he threw

across the Potomac, or his wonderful twenty-two-foot jump.

But when we find, for instance, that such a painstaking and judicious local historian as Paige, who had unrivalled opportunities for collecting and sifting evidence, and the greatest regard for all authentic relics of the past, makes no reference to the Elm in his account of Washington's arrival in Cambridge,[1] we are justified at least in assuming an attitude of open-mindedness, and in making some investigation of the subject along simple and obvious lines.

I

First of all, then, what do the upholders of the tradition claim?

Nothing at all, as I understand, concerning Washington's arrival in Cambridge on Sunday, July 2 — but everything concerning his "taking command" on Monday, July 3, 1775. This simplifies matters at once; for the events of those two days were very different, and must be kept sharply separated in all that follows.

The text, so to speak, of the traditionists, seems to be taken from the letter which John Adams had written a fortnight before from Philadelphia:

[1] *History of Cambridge* (1877), 421.

> I hope the utmost politeness will be shown to these officers [Washington and Lee] on their arrival. The whole army, I think, should be drawn up upon the occasion, and all the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war displayed; — no powder burned, however.

This passage is not only sufficiently blatant in itself, but (since the writer of course knew the utter impossibility of pomp and circumstance in the American forces) it is positively silly. Nevertheless the traditionists have seized upon his sentiments and, ignoring the fact that he referred to the *reception* of *both* the generals, have applied them to a perfectly distinct function which apparently never entered his head. From the picture which he suggests they have idealized the vision of a really soul-stirring ceremony, and then, as an additional touch of romance, have located it "under this tree."

A typical account of the fully developed vision is in the "Diary of Dorothy Dudley," under date of July 3, 1775:

> Today he [Washington] formally took command under one of the grand old elms on the Common. It was a magnificent sight. The majestic figure of the General mounted upon his horse, beneath the wide-spreading branches of the patriarch tree; the multitude thronging the plain around, and the houses filled with interested spectators of the scene, while the air rung with shouts of enthusiastic welcome as he drew his sword and thus declared himself the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

Let us simply remark in passing that John Adams' letter was not a statement of fact but merely the expression of a wish — not in the past tense but in the future.

And very curiously we shall find as we proceed that every other contemporary reference to the great event was also in the future tense. As for Dorothy Dudley's diary, almost everyone knows by this time that it is a literary forgery — and not a very clever forgery at that — written for the centennial anniversary volume entitled *The Cambridge of 1776*. Its whole phraseology is obviously modern, and it is full of small inaccuracies. In this passage, for example, the only house nearby was the Moore house, built about 1750, where the Shepard Church now stands: as Cambridge had been virtually deserted by its inhabitants there could have been no thronging multitude of spectators: and the army was not then the Continental Army but the Army of the United Colonies. All the same, the passage is worth repeating to show the traditionists' state of mind. It is just the sort of thing which our school-children have been fed up with for generations. And on the scene which it describes, the traditionists are ready to stake "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor." [1]

[1] The incident is pictured in substantially similar terms by sundry "popular" historians, from Washington Irving (who seems to have started the whole thing) to Henry Cabot Lodge. These gentlemen allow their enthusiasm for the main event — the first entry of Washington upon the military scene which he was to dominate for so many eventful years — to run away with their fidelity to detail. All are carefully discussed (and discredited) by Charles Martyn on page 153 of his recent scholarly and minute *Life of Artemas Ward*. This writer devotes more space and critical study to the events of early July, 1775, than any other whom I have found.

Moreover, to clinch the effect of the printed word the most outrageous pictures have been published in the history books, especially the school histories issued during the middle of the last century. In these pictures the artists have allowed their "historical imagination" to run amuck. Prancing steeds, dipping colors, dear little drummer-boys, long rows of troops aligned to a hair's breadth, gorgeously uniformed, and presenting glittering arms with fixed bayonets, thrill every youthful heart, while smack in the middle of the front rank stands the Elm, with just room for Washington, flourishing his sword, to ride between it and his immaculate warriors. What child after devouring such a scene could doubt the tradition for the rest of his life? [1]

II

Before we proceed, let us emphasize that it is agreed on all hands we are dealing with a *tradition*. Now the value of a tradition varies inversely with the civilization of the community in which it is found. Among savage tribes, where traditions are handed down from father to

[1] Perhaps the most amazing of these pictures was published as the "front page feature" of *Ballou's Pictorial* for July 7, 1855. It is credited to "Mr. Warren, the artist." Washington, mounted apparently on a Shetland pony, is backed up tight against the Elm, and gazes calmly off into space, surrounded by an indescribable confusion of staff officers, orderlies, infantry in heavy marching order, cavalry, cannon, and enthusiastic ladies standing up in barouches to point out the hero to their children.

son with solemn ritual, they are as authentic as written records. But the invention of printing may be said to have killed the reliability of tradition. As we all know, any sort of statement has only to be made in type to be believed. Have we not "seen it in the papers?" This bit of psychology is at the basis of all modern advertising.

A modern tradition is thus at the mercy of every unscrupulous meddler who can rub one idea against another. As Carlyle says in his *Essays on History:* — "Our Letter of Instructions comes to us in the saddest state; falsified, blotted out, torn, lost, and but a shred of it in existence." In a modern community a tradition grows like Jack's Beanstalk, and sends out the most amazing ramifications. Witness the preposterous embellishment of the Elm Tradition — that Washington built a platform in its branches where he was accustomed to sit and "survey the camps." [1] Considering that his view would have been limited to a few hundred yards in any direction, this would indeed have been a pleasant and restful method of spending time for a Commander almost driven to death by his manifold cares and responsibilities!

When we admit, then, that we are discussing a tradition, and a tradition of modern times in a highly civi-

[1] S. A. Drake, *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex* (1874), p. 268.

lized community, it is tantamount to saying that we are leaning upon a very feeble reed. A tradition for instance, connected with the founding of Harvard College would be entitled to much more weight, because arising much earlier and in a much more primitive society. But at the risk of breaking a butterfly on the wheel, let us try to trace this tradition as far back as we can.

The first appearance in black and white that its champions claim for it seems to be a short article by John Langdon Sibley in his *American Magazine of Useful Knowledge* for 1837. The crucial passage is this:

> Whitfield stood in its shade and moved a vast multitude by his eloquence. . . . The Revolutionary soldiers, who stood shoulder to shoulder, — blessings be on their heads, — tell us that when Washington arrived at Cambridge, he drew his sword as commander-in-chief of the American army, for the first time, beneath its boughs, and resolved within himself that it should never be sheathed till the liberties of his country were established. Glorious old tree, that hast stood in sight of the smoke of Lexington and Bunker's Hill battles, and weathered the storms of many generations, — worthy of reverence.

Enthusiasm rather than accuracy marks this passage. The author is flatly in error as to the Whitefield Elm, draws the long bow as to the battle smoke, and does not explain how the Revolutionary soldiers could divine what Washington resolved within himself! Such accessories appreciably weaken the main statement. The article is chiefly interesting as containing the first known

picture of the Elm, with a signboard nailed to its trunk for the direction of travellers.

In 1844 another picture of the Elm was made — a pencil sketch by Miss Quincy, daughter of the president of Harvard. According to a memorandum in the corner of this sketch, in 1830, or fourteen years earlier, "an old resident" remembered that Washington "stood" (not rode) at "about the place" when he took command. Like Sibley, she gives no names or direct statements — all is vague and at second hand. This seems to indicate that the tradition was then, so to speak, in its fluid or formative state. But old residents will remember anything. The older they are the more they will remember. We all know the story of the convivial octogenarian who before dinner could remember George Washington, and after dinner could remember Christopher Columbus.

Anyhow, it was evidently in the 1830's that the tradition began to appear in recorded form. In all that long interval from 1775 there had been innumerable Fourth of July orations, political sermons, and other patriotic harangues, many of them printed and preserved, which might easily have referred to such a striking event. But nothing of the sort has been brought forward by the traditionists. The tale apparently had no recorded existence for over fifty years!

In 1851, Benson J. Lossing, after a visit to Cambridge,

printed the story (with another sketch, showing the Moore house also) in his *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution.* Here the embellishments begin. Washington "walked" — he was then still on foot — from his quarters to the tree, "stepped a few paces in front, made some remarks, drew his sword, and formally took command of the Continental Army." This is quite mild and unassuming — almost tentative. But unfortunately Lossing locates the Elm "on Washington Street"[1] and "at the *north* end of the Common"; and also locates Washington as *then* in the Vassall-Longfellow house, "in which mansion, *and at Winter Hill,* he passed most of his time." Further, in his *Seventeen Seventy-Six,* published in 1847 *without* the tradition (i. e. before he had seen Miss Quincy?), Lossing makes Washington arrive in Cambridge on July 12. Thinking that such a frame for the picture was rather shaky, the late Horace E. Scudder, in the interests of local antiquaries, wrote to Lossing to ask where he got his authority for the story. But no satisfactory answer was ever received.[2]

[1] A retraction is necessary here. I find this portion of the way *was* known as Washington Street till 1848. It is a curious illustration of the early indifference to (or doubt of) the tradition that the title was then deliberately dropped, and the name Garden Street extended to the whole length of the thoroughfare. The public interest of those days was plainly much greater in the Botanic Garden than in the Elm — a condition long since reversed!

[2] For the above data I am mainly indebted to Professor Albert Bushnell Hart.

In 1864 the thing became an accepted part of history by a very simple device. The City of Cambridge, during the height of the Civil War "patriotism," did a good bit of propaganda by erecting the granite tablet "to commemorate," as the vote of the Aldermen vaguely read, "the Revolutionary event and date that rendered said Tree historical." Of course after such an indorsement from such an authority, no "100 per cent. American" could do otherwise than accept the "fact."

It was not till this period, by the way, that the Elm attracted sufficient notice to be marked on the maps of Cambridge as one of the local points of interest. From that time its fame steadily increased, fostered by scores of writers and hundreds of speakers, until as has been said it became the Mecca of uncounted thousands of tourists, sight-seers, and "souvenir hounds" — the city's chief "exhibition piece."

Thus snowball-like grew the tradition, from vague and feeble beginnings ever gaining, as it rolled along, in weight and importance, till it represented the greatest Revolutionary event in town. Nevertheless, almost apocryphal as it seems in its present form, we must not forget one point in its favor. A tradition may grow and flower surprisingly; but it doesn't grow like a kind of historical orchid. It must have its root in something definite. Very few traditions associated with a given

location spring from nothing at all. If I point out to my little boy the crack in the parlor floor where I once lost a quarter, my descendants will doubtless in time show each other the very room where great-grandfather was declared a bankrupt — but it will be the same parlor.

Now it is a notable example of the survival of our ancestral "tree worship" to consider what a number of famous trees there are (or were) in Cambridge. There was the "Whitefield Elm" already noted. There was the "Election Oak" across the Common, on the spot now marked by another tablet. There was the "Spreading Chestnut Tree" beside which stood the "village smithy," at the corner of Brattle and Story Streets. There were the "Rebellion Tree" and the "Class Tree" in the College Yard. There were the "Palisade Willows," on Mount Auburn Street, made famous by Lowell's poem. We confidently challenge any other community to exhibit such an historical and poetical arboretum.

Yet none of these trees have ever been associated with the name of Washington. He has a tree all to himself. We will allow the "unpatriotic" and the "un-American" and other evil minded persons to insinuate that as this particular tree was not already "tagged" it was conveniently open to be assigned to the Father of His Country. Let such cavillers go. We are quite ready

to admit that from the considerations above set forth Washington probably did do *something*, active or passive, beneath his Elm. The only question is — what?

III

In trying to answer the question we may first apply the "process of exclusion," and consider (even, it is to be feared, at tedious length) what he almost certainly did *not* do. Let us begin with the "antecedent probabilities." What was natural and likely under the circumstances? What were the known conditions under which Washington "took command?" And what logically follows from them?

We may first discuss the topography. The road from Watertown (the most ancient traveled way in town) came down by what is now Brattle Street, passing the scattered country seats of the rich Tories, and turned into the present Mason Street. Its lower end debouched upon the Common, then a perfectly open plain. Around the edge of the Common were several dwellings, the schoolhouse, the Episcopal church, the graveyard, and the buildings of Harvard College. At this point, therefore, the real village might be said to begin; and here stood a big elm, either at the side of the road or just within the dooryard of the Moore house already mentioned.

Now important military ceremonies do not *normally* take place under roadside trees, especially with an excellent parade ground only a few yards away. (If the Elm had stood in the *center* of the Common instead of cramped against the edge and almost in one corner, the probabilities would be much more in its favor.) And in such an important affair as taking command of an army, the leading figure of all would not *naturally* "take cover" whether under a tree or any other shelter. The ceremony (if any) emphatically calls for him to seek an open space. Or are we to assume that the immortal George, like the immortal Robin Hood, sate himself down 'neath greenwood tree and called on his merry men to gather round his leafy retreat? No manual of tactics covers such an emergency. Perhaps an exhibition drill by the Shriners — but why pursue the inquiry?

The supposition, by the way, that Washington "sheltered himself from the heat beneath its branches" is too ridiculous to be taken seriously. Would a man in the prime of vigor, inured to all weathers, act like a schoolgirl preserving her complexion? Would a Commander on his first appearance before his men give such an example of trivial self-indulgence? Would Washington confess himself inferior in stamina to sturdy farmers from the hayfields who two weeks before had sweated and blistered through that infernal Seventeeth of June? Assuredly not, — but we are digressing.

Secondly, what inferences can be drawn from the date? It was only a fortnight after Bunker Hill. Everybody expected — and expected very naturally — that the British would follow up their victory by another attack. This second attack did in fact very nearly come off — though the historians have generally failed to notice the circumstance. A letter from Cambridge (to which we shall have occasion to refer again) dated Monday, July 3, states:

> When the Generals were within twenty miles of the camp, they received an express that the Parliamentary troops had, on Saturday morning, about 6 o'clock, begun a very heavy cannonading on the town of Roxbury, which continued better than two hours, without intermission, tho' with little or no loss on the side of the Provincials, and that they expected a general attack on Sunday, about two o'clock, at the time of high water; that we had confirmed, and this I believe was prevented by a heavy rain, which began at half-past twelve, and continued till late at night.[1]

Even on the very day of the alleged "taking command," Glover's regiment (stationed just behind Harvard College) was ordered to be ready to march at a minute's warning to support General Folsom "in case his line should be attacked."

Pretty plainly, then, the camp during those days was in a state of considerable trepidation. The paramount need was to strengthen the defences, and the army was strung out all the way from Malden to Roxbury, digging

[1] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 12, 1775.

like beavers. In Cambridge village there were not more than three or four regiments, and even these were heavily depleted by drafts for the entrenching parties. To have assembled the army, or even a respectable portion of it, for a grand parade on Cambridge Common at that time would have been a risky business — rather like calling off the ditchers at a forest fire to attend a political rally. And thus to assemble them, to bully or coax them into any sort of mass formation (for according to Von Steuben the men had an invincible habit of marching in single file like the Indians), to go through any sort of ceremony, and to disentangle them again would have taken up the best part of a day. It is not *likely* that Washington would have sanctioned any loss of time like that. Besides, he himself was too desperately anxious (as we shall see) to get a look at the enemy and the location of his own forces to wait for anything of the kind.

In the third place, what can we learn from those same sturdy farmers? There probably never was an army — except perhaps the late lamented Boers — so little fitted by inclination or by training for "fuss and feathers." The men, officers and all, could shovel and shoot. At that point their military notions stopped. Their drill was a farce. Timothy Pickering asserted that not one officer out of five knew even the commands for the sim-

plest evolutions, much less how to execute them. Most of the camps, according to William Gordon, were in a condition of most unmilitary nastiness. Nobody cared a fig for uniforms. Washington had to *order* the officers to wear colored ribbons so as to be distinguished in any way from the privates. Even in the matter of an official flag there was so little interest that the whole thing was left in abeyance until the war was almost half done. Esprit de corps was entirely lacking. The troops of each colony were under control of their own commanders only, and frequently not on good terms with their neighbors. Up to that time, there is record of only one occasion on which the bulk of the army had been assembled for concerted manoeuvres — a practice march to Charlestown and back on May 13 — a feat which seems to have astonished everybody concerned, including the enemy. On one point indeed the army seems to have been well supplied. There was, if countless family traditions are to be believed, a superabundance of drummer-boys. But as in the Civil War, this merely allowed the youngsters to enlist and see the fun, and probably gave a painfully uncertain quality of field music.

How are we going to construct a soul-stirring military function out of elements like these? Where do the illustrators get the material for their elaborate uniforms, glittering arms, and serried ranks of the army beneath

the Elm? Is it *probable* that the officers would have attempted, or that Washington would have encouraged, a spectacle which would have done nothing but reflect discredit and ridicule upon his motley, fidgety, and none-too-enthusiastic forces? Let any militia officer of today reply.

And fourthly, how about Washington himself? It is well known that he was extremely unassuming and modest — so modest that when he was nominated for the high command by the Continental Congress he immediately left the hall. Moreover, none realized better that he was in a very delicate position. As Charles Martyn points out, he was not yet the popular idol that he later became.[1] He was merely a distinguished stranger, coming with nobody knew what theories of his own, to oust the New England commander of a New England army, a well-known and trusted veteran, who had just received the highest mark of confidence from the other colonies. For, after Ward's handling of the affair at Bunker Hill, both Connecticut and Rhode Island had voted to put their forces also under his unreserved control. And thus not only in fact, but in title, he had become "Commander-in-Chief of the Allied American Army." [2] Washington was therefore the *second* and not

[1] *Life of Artemas Ward*, 151, *n.*

[2] See "Rhode Island Records," vii., 355.

the first commander-in-chief — a point not generally appreciated. At all events, it was certainly *natural* for him to walk softly and sing small at first — not to flourish his sword and prance up and down the camp.

Further, George Washington was accompanied by Charles Lee. Now Lee was immensely popular, an old campaigner, a bluff hail-fellow with everyone, and enjoyed a military reputation which very nearly got him the nomination instead of Washington himself. He thus filled the popular eye quite as much as the new Commander. Every "address of welcome" that Washington received on his way to Cambridge was accompanied by another to Lee. When they arrived at the camp their names were universally coupled. Most contemporary accounts speak of "the Generals" as doing this or that. Lee, being intensely jealous of his chief, took good care to stick to him like a leech, and was quite capable of making trouble if Washington got too much attention.

The diplomatic situation, in fact, may roughly be compared to a dignified and rather inscrutable Texan, closely accompanied by Theodore Roosevelt, relieving General Edwards in the middle of his campaign with the 26th Division in France. Under such circumstances it seems *likely* that Washington would have considered it the part of prudence to get into the saddle as quietly and unostentatiously as possible.

For every reason, then, — personal, practical, political, and diplomatical — it is not *probable* that Washington "took command" in any such flamboyant style as old Cantabrigians so fondly assert.

IV

Yes, say the traditionists, all this is very pretty but it is mere theory. Very well, let us leave the realm of antecedent probability and proceed to the records.

Fortunately we have plenty of records — legislative, military and civil, — by press and public, by men and women. What can we fairly infer from them?

It is appropriate to start with those of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, the ultimate authority in the military as well as the civil affairs of the province. Apparently a good deal worried by John Adams' letter and similar suggestions, they held a number of anxious debates on the subject of Washington's *reception*. A committee was appointed, their report was tabled, taken up again, amended, and finally, on June 26, a formal resolve was passed. The house of the President of Harvard College (Wadsworth House) as the most dignified in town, was, except one room reserved for the owner, to be "taken, cleansed, prepared and furnished for the reception of General Washington and General Lee." General Ward was to be officially notified of the

"expected early arrival" of these dignitaries, so that he "may give such orders for their honorable *reception* as may accord with the rules and circumstances of the army, and the respect due to their rank, without, however, any expense of powder, and *without taking the troops off* from the necessary attention to their duty at this crisis of our affairs."

Pretty discouraging, this! The "booming of cannon" and the "joyful salvos of musketry" which the "popular" historians delight to describe, were taboo right away. Any general assemblage of troops was forbidden, too.

Let us see how Ward interpreted the "respect due to their rank," under "the circumstances of the army." Here it is in his general orders for Saturday, July 1 — his only reference to the subject: "That the drummers in this encampment [i.e., Cambridge] attend upon Mr. John Bassett, drum major, at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning, and receive orders from him." No reference to a parade or the concentration of any troops. And the orders for July 2, Ward's last day of command, are equally negative. They are concerned solely with the much neglected subject of sanitation — sick inspection and cleaning up the camp. Apparently Ward, like a sensible man, was much more anxious to present Washington with a healthy and tidy army than with a complimen-

tary review.[1] The utmost that he seems to have contemplated was to have the new generals "drummed into town," or perhaps to have additional field music for the first day's guard mounting.

We may here add that those drummers duly reported to Mr. Bassett on Sunday morning and received their "orders." Which orders were evidently (on account of the weather) to come again on Monday and bring the fifers too. For the enthusiastic Joseph Hodgkins, Lieutenant in Wade's company of Ipswich, wrote to his better half:

> Cambridge, July 3, 1775. Monday morning about 8 o'clock. I now set down to write a line to you . . . Geaneral Washington and Lees got into Cambridge yesterday, and to Day they are to take Vew of ye Armey, & that will be attended with a grate Deal of grandor. There is at this time one & twenty Drummers & as many feffers a Beting and Playing Round the Prayde.[2]

Note Mr. Hodgkins' future tense again. If he was prepared to be so thrilled with a "grate Deal of grandor" is it conceivable that he would have utterly failed to mention it had it materialized? Note also that taking a view is very different from taking command. We shall find that the generals did indeed take a very anxious

[1] See *Mass. Historical Society Proceedings*, xv, 113.

[2] Ipswich Antiquarian Papers, vol. ii, no. xx. Even larger "massed bands" are recorded. Thus at Roxbury, Elihu Clark noted on June 9, 1775, "I see 36 Drum 27 fifers all playing [at] once." MS. Journal, Library of Congress.

view of the army, but without any recorded grandeur. Note further that one and twenty drummers, at the usual allowance of one to a company, represent only about two regiments "in this encampment."

Such were the official preliminaries. Not much ammunition for traditionists here. Let us turn to the newspaper account of the actual arrival. Now it so happened that the brothers Hall, proprietors of that estimable weekly, the "Essex Gazette and New England Chronicle" of Salem, had foreseen a good deal of job printing would be needed at Cambridge, and had moved their office, by permission, into one of the rooms in Stoughton Hall — thus continuing the printing tradition that had been one of Harvard's first ventures. From their window, therefore, they could look out on the Common and see everything that passed. This was their account, appearing in the issue of the following Thursday:

> Cambridge, July 6. Last Sabbath came to town from Philadelphia His Excellency George Washington Esquire, appointed by the Continental Congress General and Commander-in-Chief of the American Forces, and was received with every testimony of respect due to a gentleman of his real worth and elevated dignity. His Excellency was accompanied by the Hon. Charles Lee, Esquire, and a number of other gentlemen.

The most striking thing about this news item is its amazingly non-military language. Had Washington been a well-known scientist or a famous philosopher,

and Lee a learned judge, the phraseology could not have been more civilian in tone. In fact, it almost suggests that the editors were trying to make the best of a very poor business. While as for the pomp and display, if any, on the Monday, the reporter evidently couldn't make "copy" of it at all; for he says nothing whatever about it. This again is pretty fair negative evidence.

Civilian records made on the spot are scarce, since (as already stated) most of the non-combatants had left town. Mrs. Adams, however, wrote to her husband a few days later:

> The appointment of the Generals, Washington and Lee, gives universal satisfaction. . . . I was struck with General Washington. You had prepared me to entertain a favorable opinion of him, but I thought the half was not told me. Dignity, with ease and complacency, the gentleman and soldier, looked agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line of his face. Those lines of Dryden instantly occurred to me:

— and the good soul wanders off into poetry.

Surely a lady of such appreciative and emotional temperament would have been the first to chronicle any soul-stirring ceremony such as the traditionists claim. But unfortunately she doesn't; and there seems only one inference to draw from her silence.

The letter from Cambridge dated July 3, already quoted, after describing the rain goes on to say, "The Generals have spent this whole day in reviewing the

troops, lines, fortifications, etc. They find the troops to be 15,000 strong, and the works to be in as good order as could be expected." Here we have the facts in a nutshell. Washington's "whole day" is accounted for, in precisely the way any sensible man would expect, at the very time when the traditionists solemnly place him beneath the Elm, waving his sword and haranguing his assembled forces. But as all the fortifications and nearly all the troops were miles away from the Common, this entry gets him farther off from the Elm than ever. The word "review" here is applied to earthworks as well as troops, and hence must mean "inspect" — or "visit" as Washington himself, and various other chronicelers, say. It cannot mean "take command," because it is distinctly applied to *both* Washington and Lee.

Out in Stoughton, Ezekiel Price was keeping a diary. He was in close touch with what was going on in Cambridge, and recorded all items of news that were interesting enough to filter out of the camp. In fact, he may be considered as reproducing faithfully the general talk of the day. His entries are as follows:

Monday, July 3. The *plentiful rains* that fell yesterday made it exceeding pleasant this morning. Toward noon, very warm. In the afternoon, assisted in raking hay. Reports of the day, — that General Washington had got to Cambridge with General Lee and others.

There is no entry for July 4.

Wednesday, July 5. Heard . . . that General Washington had visited the camps, and the soldiers were much pleased with him; and,

by the motions of the Continental Army, it is expected that something of importance will soon happen.[1]

We may add that the civilian chronicler, William Gordon, who was on the spot and very thick with Washington, recording his movements in detail, makes no mention of any ceremony of "taking command" in his account of Washington's arrival at Cambridge.[2]

Our liveliest and most suggestive records are the camp diaries, kept by many of the soldiers themselves. These are surprisingly numerous — and surprisingly silent on the great event. In fact, many of them enter specifically on July 3 — "Nothing of importance this day," — "Nothing remarkable," — and the like. One of the best for our inquiry is that of Noah Chapin, Jr., of Somers, Conn., Ensign in Willes's company of Spencer's regiment, stationed at Roxbury. Noah was a poor speller but a conscientious recorder. Moreover, he was a hero-worshipper, and took a sort of fascinated interest in the doings of the new Generals. This is what he wrote:

1775. July 2 this Day about 11 o'c Genrel Washington & Genrel Lee with several other Gentlemen arrived at Cambridge and in the afternoon they Road out to the line of forts at Prospect Hill in Charlestown.

3. this day the Gener from Cambrid Came to Brookline fort.

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[1] *Mass. Historical Society Proceedings*, vii, 185.

[2] See his *History of the American Revolution* (1788), ii, 63.

4. this Day near 2000 Roxbury Troops musterd toward Cambrid to waight on the new Generals But was Rejected By the General Who said they did not want *to have time spent* in waiting on them.[1]

5. this Day the Generals from Cambridge Came to Roxbury in the fore noon and viewed the Lines and forts and about Noon Returned Back.[2]

Here let the traditionists answer one question: If the soldiers had already seen (and perhaps heard) the General in a grand parade and speech-making on July 3, why were they so anxious to get a look at him on the 4th?

Paul Lunt of Newburyport, First Lieutenant in Era Lunt's company of Little's regiment, was stationed at Prospect Hill. On July 3 he noted: "Turned out early in the morning, got into readiness *to be reviewed by the General.*"[3]

It will be observed that this entry, as well as Chapin's, exactly bears out the letter of July 3 quoted above. It evidently means that Washington inspected the troops at Prospect Hill on Monday just as he inspected those at Brookline. Such a wide "swing around the circle" certainly leaves little time for the far-famed function on the Common. Indeed, all the positive documentary evi-

[1] Compare Clark's entry for this date, at Roxbury: "the rode-islanders went over to Cambridge to wait on General Washington." MS. Journal, Library of Congress. "Gen. Greene on July 4th sent a detachment of 200 . . . to welcome his Excellency to camp," and they "met with a very gracious reception." (Martyn, *Life of Artemas Ward*, 153 *n.*) This must be the same occasion. Greene and his Rhode-Islanders were at Jamaica Plain till July 20.

[2] Manuscript at State Library, Hartford, Conn.

[3] *Mass. Historical Society Proceedings*, vii, 192.

dence that we can collect leads *away* from the Elm rather than towards it; while the negative evidence of course omits all reference to it in a manner almost equally significant.

James Stevens, an Andover carpenter, in Poor's company of Frye's regiment, stationed right in Cambridge, has perhaps the most illuminating notes of all:

> Saturday July the 1 . . . we preaded to receive the new jeneral Washington but he did not com.
>
> Sunday ye 2 this morning we preaded to receive the new jeneral *it rained & we wos dismesd* the jeneral com in about hune there was no meting in the afternune. . . .[Evidently on account of the weather.]
>
> Munday ye 3 *nothing happeny extrorderly* we preaded three times I went up on the hil.[1]

Stout old William Heath was in command of the whole Roxbury division of the army. As a high ranking officer he would be greatly interested in all the doings of his new superior. Yet after duly recording in his diary the arrival of Washington on the 2nd, he makes no further entry at all until the 5th, when he mentions, like Chapin, the visit to Roxbury.[2]

Thus, in climbing the ladder of rank, we come finally to Washington himself, the main figure of the tradition. Now or never we shall have the truth. Here is his official report to the President of the Congress:

[1] Essex Institute Collections, xlviii, 49.

[2] See his *Memoirs*, N. Y., 1901. Original MS. at Mass. Historical Society.

Camp at Cambridge, July 10, 1775. Sir: I arrived safe at this place . . . after a journey attended with a good deal of fatigue, and retarded by necessary attentions to the successive civilities which accompanied me on my whole route. Upon my arrival I *immediately* [Sunday afternoon] visited the several posts occupied by our troops; and *as soon as the weather permitted* [Monday] reconnoitered those of the enemy. I found the latter strongly entrenched on Bunker's Hill, about a mile from Charlestown, and advanced about half a mile from the place of the late action, etc.

This is perhaps the unkindest cut of all. Washington is ready enough to mention other "civilities." Why not the greatest, crowning civility of the whole series — if it occurred? No. If there was a tithe of the sword-drawing and curvetting, the drumming and fifing, the parading and saluting that Cambridge loves to dwell upon — under the Elm *or anywhere else* — it must have been recorded in *some* of the numerous sources we have examined.

How much interest, by the way, did Washington take in his Elm in after years? Sidney Willard, in his *Memories of Youth and Manhood*, describing Washington's visit to Cambridge in 1789, says:

Then nine years of age, I distinctly remember sitting on the fence before the old house which still [1855] remains at the corner near the tree, and seeing the majestic warrior, mounted on a fitting steed, "with all his trim belonging," pass by.

Here he ends. Was the tree decorated for the occasion? Did Washington stop and point it out to his escort as

the scene of one of the greatest events of his life? Did he, in the regulation style, annex a souvenir of the occasion? Apparently not. He only "passed by." Priest and Levite in the parable were not more unfeeling to the wayfarer than Washington to the youthful traditionist perched on the fence.

Why then, we ask, this astounding universal *omission to record* by so many diverse, eager, vigilant recorders? Why this "conspiracy of silence" by all concerned? Plainly the traditionists must explain this away in some reasonable manner or shut up shop.

V

But though nobody on the spot seems to have been sufficiently impressed by the ceremony (if any) of "taking command" to set down the slightest reference to it when it was fresh in memory, there were at least two eyewitnesses whose accounts were recorded — at second hand — long afterwards. One of these was Andrew Leavitt of Amherst, N. H., a soldier in Crosby's company of Reed's regiment, probably stationed at Medford. About 1840, in extreme old age, he is said to have given Mr. Daniel F. Secomb the following description of the scene:

The officers placed their men in as good shape as they could, but they were a motley looking set, no two dressed alike. Some were

armed with fowling pieces, some with rifles, others with muskets without bayonets. When all was in readiness, Washington and his staff advanced to the square prepared for their reception. He was a large, noble-looking man, in the prime of life, and was mounted on a powerful black horse over which he seemed to have perfect control. After a short address to the soldiers, he took from his pocket a Psalm book, from which he read the one hundred and first Psalm (another account says it was then sung by the soldiers to the tune of Old Hundred).

Whether Secomb wrote this down at the time, or simply carried it in his head for some forty years, is not clear. At any rate, he did not publish it until 1883.[1] It certainly makes no mention of the Elm, but of a hollow square formation into which Washington rode; nor of the drawing of any sword, but instead — a psalm book! Indeed this whole passage is so odd and improbable that commentators like Martyn dismiss it as the maunderings of a nonagenarian.[2]

The other account is by the Reverend Hezekiah Packard of Bridgewater, who served in Captain Cobb's com-

[1] Secomb, *History of Amherst, N. H.* (*1883*), 371. This Psalm contains some verses easily applicable to the opposing parties: "Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach, I will not suffer him . . . Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me . . . I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land, that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord."

[2] "One may read with some curious interest the following alleged recollections [of Leavitt, 1883] given to the author [Secomb] forty or so years earlier by Andrew Leavitt, a very old soldier, then about ninety years of age." — Charles Martyn, *Life of Artemas Ward*, 153 *n.*

Leavitt died in the summer of 1846. *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, 2d Series*, xvii, 129.

pany of Titcomb's regiment. His story, also told in extreme old age, was transmitted, also after a very long interval, by Judge Samuel P. Hadley of Chelmsford, who says —

> Our village pastor was a Harvard freshman at Cambridge when the war broke out; and, with an elder brother, he joined the army as a fifer, and stood at attention when Washington took command, and reviewed his army of farmers on Cambridge common. I sat on his knee while he described to me the scene. "Washington," said he, "was a grand looking man; and, when he walked by with his staff, I was so impressed that I forgot to remove my hat."

Here again is no mention of the Elm or the sword-drawing; and Washington "walks by" — saluted, apparently, by the ludicrously civilian removal of hats! The most casual reader will notice that these stories are not only sufficiently surprising in themselves, but are totally unlike. In fact, they probably do not refer to any grand ceremony at all, but to two separate reviews or inspections which Washington made of different detachments on that busy Monday. At the best, even taking them at their face value, they not only fail to give the least confirmation of the tradition, but suggest, in the psalm book and the hat doffing, a most unmilitary ceremonial which must somewhat stagger the believers in an imposing and properly "patriotic" parade.

Both these accounts of course are nothing but "hearsay evidence." But Hezekiah Packard is said to have

made a direct written statement himself, mentioning the Elm. If so, it is the only first-hand material we have, and as such deserves some further examination. The facts appear to be these: In 1837, or 62 years after the event, at the age of 76, Packard set down, for the benefit of his children, a series of autobiographical notes to be opened after his death. He died in 1849, and the manuscript was promptly used by his son Alpheus in writing a memoir of his father. He naturally paid great attention to it, and quotes the Revolutionary portion, apparently verbatim, in much detail — how Hezekiah at the age of thirteen and a half enlisted as a fifer, "dwelt in tents near Cambridgeport" during the summer of 1775, "drew our provisions from College Hall [Harvard Hall] where beef, pork, etc. were kept for our army;" and how he again saw service at Rhode Island in 1777 — but not a word anywhere about the Elm or the events of July 3.

Unfortunately this manuscript has long been lost. But Hezekiah's other son Joseph also quotes, or assumes to quote, from it in his book *Recollections of a Long Life*, published in 1902. His quotations of the same Revolutionary portion however are surprisingly different from those made more than fifty years before, and almost seem as if he were quoting from memory, after the loss of the manuscript. He did not even take the trouble to

compare the quotations given by Alpheus. Whole sentences are altered until nothing but their general sense remains, there are omissions in the middle of important passages, and after the Rhode Island episode (far out of its chronological order) occurs this addition: "I saw Gen. Washington take command of the army under the Elm tree in Cambridge." [1]

Considering the above circumstances this is not as strong evidence as we should like; but until the original manuscript can be found and the entry substantiated, it may be allowed to stand for what it is worth.

VI

The real trouble with the traditionists is twofold. They have mixed their dates and they are obsessed by a fallacy. They have confused the events of Sunday and Monday. They have failed to notice that almost all the evidence of preparations for a ceremony refers to Washington's *reception* on Sunday. That ceremony, whatever it was intended to amount to (and it cannot have been much), was completely spoiled by the rain. For rain was in those days a far more serious military matter than it is now. Aside from the lack of waterproof clothing, no body of men could be turned out un-

[1] For much help in tracing this singular sequence my thanks are due to Professor William Romaine Newbold of the University of Pennsylvania.

der arms during a storm, for the simple reason that a wet flintlock converted a soldier into a nonentity at a stroke. Up to the time of the invention of the percussion cap, no battle could be fought in the rain. Sagely enough did the old saw adjure us to "Put your trust in Providence but keep your powder dry." Neither could there be any martial music. There was as yet no "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals," and in the rain the drummers couldn't drum.

To be sure there is some evidence of an expected function of some sort in Cambridge early Monday morning, but it was small, local, and probably simmered down to a brief inspection only. For anything more elaborate, Washington was too busy galloping from fort to fort examining his own lines and those of the enemy. He had neither time nor inclination for receiving any half-baked and impolitic honors.

Thus, though there might have been, had all gone well, something in the way of a military reception on the second, there was nothing in the way of a dramatic "taking command" on the third. But the traditionists jumble up the two. In order to support their story, they must not only assume that a grand parade actually did take place, but to connect it with "taking command" they must further assume that it took place on Monday — that is, that Washington stole into Cambridge on

Sunday, virtually unnoticed, and burst into full bloom, so to speak, the next day. That is not the way in which military honors are rendered, however.

The fallacy under which the traditionists labor regards the essential nature of "taking command." Does this consist of drawing a sword and riding up and down a line of troops? Of course not. The idea seems to have been derived from the sight of a regimental parade. There the adjutant, having formed the line, turns it over to the colonel. The latter thereupon draws his sword to show that he has taken charge and that all subsequent orders will proceed from him. But that is a mere gesture. It invests an officer with no new power. And that every American schoolboy should be taught the contrary, is a pathetic commentary on our national ignorance of military affairs. No British or Continental schoolboy would accept it for a moment. Our Civil War veterans at least should know better. For during that conflict the command of armies was frequently taken, without as much as the tap of a drum by newly arrived generals whose swords were still packed in their baggage.

The fact of the matter is, we have all been so long bedazzled and befuddled with this traditional sword-drawing gaseonade that we cannot seem to realize that taking command of an army in the field, with all it im-

plies, is a mighty serious business. Like most other important administrative events, military and civil, its essentials are of a quasi-legal and extremely prosy description. They consist mainly in the new commander's presenting his credentials, otherwise reading his commission, in taking over the headquarters order book and other documentary evidence of his authority, and especially in publishing official notice of the fact in general orders.

These uninteresting and un-theatrical formalities seem to have been duly observed in the case before us. Ward's order book, as the original shows, was turned over to Washington and continued without a break. But the general orders for Monday morning are headed for the first time, "By His Excellency George Washington, Esquire, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the United Colonies of North America." (These orders, by the way, consist of nothing but a call for every colonel to make a return of his regiment and his ammunition in detail.) This of course is a perfectly sufficient basis for the usual statement that Washington "took command of the army" on July 3, 1775. That is, he *began to give his commands* on that date. However, as general orders were issued early in the morning, it was necessary to prepare them the night before. The order book, therefore, must have been turned over to

Washington on Sunday. Indeed, some contemporary writers assert that Washington "took command" on the second. At all events, considering that Ward's headquarters were just across the Common, nobody but a lunatic would maintain that the above technicalities took place under the Elm.

Let us recollect again — all popular ideals to the contrary — that Washington was performing no original or creative act, that he did not wave his sword and by a sort of military magic, cause his famous army to spring into being. He was simply taking over the control of a distinctly "going concern," a force that had already fought a highly creditable pitched battle under a totally different commander. Nobody, either then or now, at all conversant with military etiquette would expect (or apparently did expect) that the *actual transfer* of command could be turned into a grand ceremonial; though there do seem to have been some anticipations of a special review *afterwards*.

Speaking of fallacies, we may in conclusion glance at one other — the "unbroken chain." Suppose A makes an oral statement to his son B concerning what he remembers of an event which happened perhaps forty years before. B, after perhaps forty years more, relates what *he* remembers of the statement to his son C, and C in turn to D. Now D, having a justifiable amount of

family pride, naturally believes he is in possession of the identical original statement. To prove it, he recites his descent from A! It is hardly necessary to point out that this does not prove that A had a trustworthy and scrupulous memory, or that his meaning was correctly understood by B — and so on down the "chain." Indeed an accurate "long range" memory is the rarest of modern gifts; for documents, as already suggested, have superseded and almost atrophied memory. (D himself will be glad enough to use them in proving his descent.) In place of the old primitive fidelity in transmitting a story, there has sprung up an irresistible tendency to "embroider" it. One has only to cite the familiar example of the growth of a bit of gossip. And what after all is tradition but historical gossip — a long-extended series of "they say's"?

Such then, in sum (errors, omissions, and typographical slips excepted), is the present state of the argument for the negative — the contention of the much abused "detractors of the Elm." If the traditionists can counter with anything weightier than more flag-flapping and more family-trees (which are quite a different species from elms), let them by all means now speak, or adopt the alternative presented in the wedding service.

VII

At the same time and per contra, to say that it is virtually certain that Washington did not, in any such heroic style as is now currently believed, "under this tree first take command of the American army" (and why "first?" How many times must command be taken?) is not to say, by any means, that he had nothing to do with it whatever. The root of the tradition, already alluded to, is still to be dug for. We thus get back to our original question: Granting the likelihood that the persistent association of the two had "something in it" to start with, what *did* Washington do under his Elm?

Perhaps the easiest way of arriving at a reasonable answer will be to make use of the probabilities and the evidence we have accumulated above, in an attempt to visualize the occurrences of that eventful Sunday, the second of July, 1775, in Cambridge.

It is eleven o'clock in the morning — the very middle of "meeting-time" (all the troops were inveterate church-goers) — and raining hard. With this double reason for keeping within, scarcely a soul is to be seen. The weather has put a stopper on the modest arrangements that Ward has felt justified in making for receiving the new generals "with the respect due to their

rank." It has done the same for the more or less independent preparations made by a few exceptionally zealous regimental commanders. Down at the main guard in the Court House (on the present site of the co-operative store) they are speculating whether it will even be a case of "Turn out the guard!" Anyway, the generals are far behind their schedule, and the waiting, like the rain, has cooled enthusiasm.

But a courier comes cantering down the road from Watertown. "They're coming!" and Ward, like a courteous host, feels he must at least go out and greet his guests. With two or three aides he splashes across the Common. But he is old and heavy and tortured with gall-stones, and he does not go far. Where the road enters the village, he halts and shelters himself from the downpour under the wide branches of a magnificent elm. In a few minutes the group of distinguished strangers is seen approaching. They are soaking wet and dog-tired — Washington himself is half sick.[1] They also draw rein (or rain) beneath the protecting roof of foliage. Ward greets them politely, and the old and the new generals shake hands. And in that hand-clasp, to put it fancifully, the electric thrill of command passes from Ward to Washington. Thence-

[1] "In poor health." Letter of Provincial Congress to Trumbull, July 4, 1775.

forth the Massachusetts man defers to the Virginian. His day is done. Everything after that is mere confirmatory ritual.

Ward conducts his new chief at once to President Langdon's. Here the most distinguished civilian in town, and bishop, so to speak, of all the clergy in New England, receives him from the hands of the most distinguished military man. Early in the afternoon, Washington, refreshed by a good dinner and dry clothes, starts off, burning with impatience "at this crisis of our affairs," to get a first look at the situation. At the end of the day he comes to Ward's headquarters in the Hastings house (on the side of the present Hemenway Gymnasium). Here a little knot of ranking officers has gathered to meet him. He reads his commission, receives the headquarters documents and any flag or insignia of rank possessed by Ward, and is introduced to his brigadiers — perhaps makes a brief speech. (If he does, Charles Lee makes another!) These necessary formalities concluded, Ward serves an excellent supper — this is another delightful and most reasonable tradition — the Madeira goes round, the proper toasts are drunk, songs are sung, and amidst old-time conviviality the great man relaxes at length from the strain of one of the most memorable days of his life.

Such is the story as nearly as we can reconstruct it. Unfortunately there is nothing dramatic or "patriotic" in it. It is merely the application of ordinary Yankee common sense — an article in which the traditionists occasionally seem to be lacking. But at least it suggests a reasonable connection between Washington and the Elm. Although in a very different form from what the traditionists would have us believe, such a connection is quite sufficient to found the tradition upon.

If the above picture be thought too elaborate, another perfectly simple explanation suggests itself. It is clear that Washington spent all of Monday, July 3, in visiting and "sizing up" as many detachments of his scattered forces as possible. Among them would naturally be included — perhaps first of all — the few regiments in Cambridge. They would no doubt be drawn up on "the parade," as the Common was then called. During the inspection, or while waiting for it to be formed, Washington very probably stood beside or near the Elm, as that was close to the road by which most of the troops would reach the formation point. By the simple citizen-soldiery the first sight of their new commander, sword in hand and perhaps himself giving orders or making a short address, might easily be construed as his "taking command" of them. So at least they might

have referred to it in after years, or so (more likely yet) it might have been interpreted by their youthful listeners. And in pointing out the location, the Elm, as the most prominent landmark, would naturally be indicated. Thus in the course of years the tree and the commander would become linked in popular imagination, and the basis for the tradition easily laid.

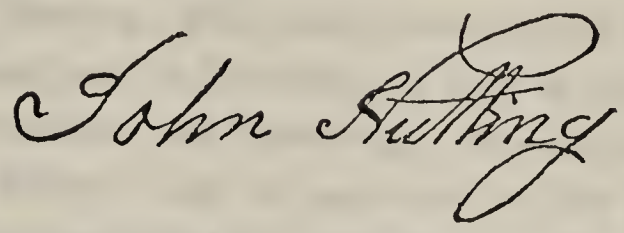
But, from what has been adduced in the course of this study, that anything more significant or impressive occurred "under this tree" it will take more than mere iteration and indignation to convince the sceptic.

It is a matter of regret that Cambridge, the scene of so many momentous occurrences in the opening stages of the Revolution, has neglected (with the same unaccountable lack of civic pride which has allowed her unique old burying ground to go to ruin) for a century and a half to erect any adequate monument to commemorate them. The Washington Elm, after a fashion, did perform that function. At least in popular estimation, it formed a tangible memento of the most stirring days in the history of Cambridge — the only local and visible focus for patriotic enthusiasm. It was more than the reputed witness of a great event. It was more than an object for that mysterious tree worship which, inherited from our remotest ancestors, still stirs obscurely within

us. It was a symbol of Our Country. And to the conscious or unconscious recognition of this fact was doubtless due a large part of the veneration in which it was held. Now nothing remains.

IV

ADVENTURES OF JOHN NUTTING, CAMBRIDGE LOYALIST



[From his Memorial to Lord George Germain, 1777.]

To paraphrase Cowper, hymning the surprising adventures of another John:

> John Nutting was a carpenter
> Of credit and renown.
> A train-band captain eke was he
> Of famous Cambridge town.

His father was James the locksmith, of humble but respectable pedigree, — so humble that only his wife's first name, Mercy, is recorded.[1] Young John was born 14 January, 1739, Old Style.[2] Within the week he was baptized,[3] after the prompt, Godfearing fashion of his

[1] Cf. L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 616, etc.

[2] From data collected by John's grandson, the late Charles Martyr Nutting, K.C., of Halifax, most kindly placed at my disposal by his nephew, Henry Haliburton Robinson, Esq., of London. Hereinafter referred to as Nutting Papers.

[3] 21 January, 1739. Register of First Parish, Cambridge.

day, and named for his uncle, the aristocrat of the family, who held the double distinction of a Harvard degree and the Collectorship at Salem.

Six years later his father died,[1] and the lad, on reaching suitable age, was apprenticed to John Walton,[2] housewright, of Reading. This worthy was destined to play an important part in his career, at least in that portion of it connected with Cambridge. He is often called Captain Walton,[3] and we may surmise that it was through his influence that his apprentice, when only seventeen, marched from Cambridge in Captain Fuller's company of Colonel William Brattle's regiment "on the alarm for the relief of Fort William Henry."[4] He served but two weeks on that expedition, getting no farther than Springfield, where the news of the final disaster to the ill-fated garrison probably reached his command.

The next year he enlisted [5] under Captain Aaron Fay in "a company of foot in His Majesty's service," form-

[1] Administration granted to the widow 27 Jan. 1745–6, with an allowance for the three youngest (*sic*) children "one of which was sickly." Middlesex Probate Records, No. 16138. It seems impossible to suppose John was the invalid.

[2] Massachusetts Archives (Muster Rolls), 96/420.

[3] In 1775, when he had moved to Cambridge, he was first lieutenant in the local company, with his brother for second. L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 408.

[4] Mass. Archives (Muster Rolls), 95/377.

[5] 2 May, 1758. Massachusetts Archives (Muster Rolls), 96/420. Nichols was a Reading man. L. Eaton, *Genealogical History of Reading*, 98.

ing a part of Colonel Ebenezer Nichols's regiment raised by Massachusetts "for the reduction of Canada." This time he saw real service, and on a pretty considerable scale. Nichols's regiment formed part of the composite force of over fifteen thousand men, regulars and militia, that gathered that summer on the shores of Lake George, and under the inefficient Abercrombie made a bootless attack on Montcalm, entrenched at Ticonderoga. Young Jack must have had his fill of wilderness-marching, lake-paddling, and stockade-building; and perhaps of fighting as well, for on at least one occasion his regiment was severely cut up.[1] He may have seen and must have lamented the untimely death of young Lord Howe, who, though nominally second in command, was the life and soul of the expedition.

These early seeds of martial experience evidently fell on good ground. Nutting's aptitude for military life, especially of the militia variety, as well as the early development of his powers of command, organization, persuasion, and *camaraderie*, so essential to promotion therein, may be inferred from the fact that ere the Revolution he had been elected "acting lieutenant" of the Cambridge company, — doubtless in place of Lieutenant Samuel Thatcher, who on the reorganization of

[1] Cf. R. Rogers, Journal, 121. J. Cleaveland, Journal, Essex Institute Historical Collections, xii. 190; etc.

the militia shortly before the outbreak of active hostilities had been promoted Captain, vice Thomas Gardner.[1] In this position his influence was certainly sufficient to make his leadership sought by both sides in the struggle,[2] as we shall see.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to picture the young militiaman returning in November from his first campaign, with the irresistible air of all true sons of Mars, making conquest then and there of the heart of his master's daughter, Mary Walton. At all events we find him three years later, just out of his indentures and entitled to call himself housewright on his own account, preparing a home for his bride in Cambridge. On November 7, 1761, he bought of William Bordman for £16 lawful money a little lot of a quarter of an acre (about where the Epworth Church now stands) "on the highway or Common as far as the land belonging to the Heirs of Mr. Johnathan Hastings dec^d" and in front of "the Tan Yard," with "half the well." [3] Here he built a modest house "two story high, three rooms on a floor" — "a good house," as one of his boarders testified later,[4] and it is something for a boarder to say that.

[1] L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 408.

[2] Memorial to the Commissioners on Loyalists' Claims. Heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[3] Middlesex Deeds, 59/266.

[4] Testimony of Nathaniel Rust before the Commissioners, 29 December,

Here the young couple established themselves, and here, 26 April, 1762,[1] was born their first child, a daughter, baptized[2] Mary for her mother; her father, as was customary (if not already done), "owning the covenant" the same day in Dr. Appleton's meeting. The next June he bought an additional strip of land from Bordman for £6 lawful.[3]

The extant records of his next few years are mainly concerned with the good old-fashioned steady increases to the family, till half a dozen babies were tumbling about the little house opposite the common. John Junior was born 3 March, 1764;[4] Mercy (named from her paternal grandmother) arrived on Washington's Birthday, 1766;[5] Mary No. 2 (No. 1 having died 12 April, 1766[6]) came to carry on the name, 1 March, 1768;[7] Elizabeth (another family cognomen) opened her eyes on 5 April, 1770;[8] James (named from his paternal

1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 303. Public Library, New York City.

[1] Nutting Papers. [2] 9 May, 1762. First Parish Records.

[3] Middlesex Deeds, 59/624.

[4] Nutting Papers. Baptized 11 March, 1764. First Parish Records. Died unmarried 30 July, 1822. Nutting Papers.

[5] Nutting Papers. Baptized 3 March, 1766. First Parish Records. Died 1784. Nutting Papers.

[6] Stone in Cambridge Churchyard.

[7] Nutting Papers. Baptized 6 March, 1768. First Parish Records. Married Captain Daniel McNeil of North Carolina, 27 November, 1788, at Halifax, and had three children. Died circa 1795. Nutting Papers.

[8] Nutting Papers. Baptized 6 May, 1770. First Parish Records. Died between 1776 and 1783. See *post*.

grandfather) joined the flock on 8 May, 1772;[1] and Susanna put in an appearance on 28 August, 1773.[2]

Meanwhile our housewright was becoming a man of substance and standing. In 1768 he was appointed one of the parish tax-collectors, and had the handling of as much as a hundred and sixty pounds on a single accounting.[3] In his turn he began to take apprentices.[4] His father-in-law Walton seems to have put work in his way, and certainly stood behind him with financial backing.[5] He himself described his business as "extensive," both as master-builder and in the lumber trade.[6] Among other important jobs, he did nearly a hundred and forty pounds' worth of work in building Mr. Thomas Oliver's fine house,[7] which under the name of "Elmwood" still stands stout and good.

He also dabbled in maritime interests. A strong streak of the sea was in his blood. The family name was

[1] Nutting Papers. Baptized perhaps at Christ Church, for by this date Nutting had left the First Parish meeting. Died between 1776 and 1783.

[2] Ibid.

[3] First Parish Account Book labelled "1763."

[4] When he went to Halifax he took two of them along. Memorial to Germain, 28 February, 1778. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[5] Middlesex Deeds, 71/430.

[6] Memorial to the Commissioners. Heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[7] "Account of Particulars of the Expences of Thomas Olivers Buildings in Cambridge." Bristol, 2 October, 1783. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 48, Public Record Office, London.

well represented among the amphibious population of Salem, Marblehead, and Gloucester,[1] and in the earliest records of the American Navy.[2] His father appears to have been the armorer of the little man-of-war *Prince of Orange* in the early 40's,[3] and at his death left, according to the inventory of his estate, "a Sain 100/–, codline 5/–." [4] Of his brothers, James was a "marriner" [5] and Samuel a surgeon aboard the *Independence* and the *Rhodes* throughout the Revolution.[6] His brother Jonathan was captured in the brig *Ruby* by the British and confined in the prison-ship at St. Lucia; but swam by night with ten companions to a vessel a mile off, overpowered her crew, and sailed away to freedom.[7] Two of his nephews, master and mate, found a sailor's grave in the loss of the *Hercules*.[8] He himself was paid "14/– for boating Mr. Serjeant's goods to Cambridge" [9] when that gentleman arrived as the new rector of Christ Church in the summer of 1767. He was so familiar with the Bay of Fundy and the coast of Maine that he was able a few years later to act as pilot to one of the British

[1] J. K. Nutting, Nutting Genealogy, *passim*.

[2] Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution, xi. *passim*.

[3] Massachusetts Archives (Muster Rolls), *passim*.

[4] Middlesex Probate Records, No. 16138.

[5] Middlesex Probate Records, No. 16140.

[6] Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution, xi. *passim*.

[7] C. Eaton, *History of Thomaston*, i. 149.

[8] *Idem*. ii. 341.

[9] Christ Church Accounts.

expeditions therealong (of which more anon). This familiarity was evidently acquired on coasting-trips to secure his supplies of lumber, which, odd as it may sound, was then almost entirely brought to Boston from the shores of Maine.[1]

It was on these trips that he became interested in acquiring lands "to the Eastward," as the phrase then went — perhaps by the advice of brother Jonathan, who from 1767 onwards was making considerable purchases and sales of real estate in what is now Thomaston, Maine, and the coast adjacent.[2] Following his example, and little foreseeing the results on his own and indeed on his country's history, our John began investing in shore lots, quite in the modern manner, just across Penobscot Bay, in what is now Castine, and up the Bagaduce River.

Save for the straggling clearings of a few of the original grantees,[3] that region was then an unbroken wilder-

[1] At the outbreak of the Revolution he "left Lumber to the Eastward to the value of £ 40 lawful Money." Testimony before the Commissioners, 29 December, 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 301. Public Library, New York City. Moreover, as early as 1750, since "The Fire Wood near *Boston* is much exhausted, we are under a necessity of fetching it from the *Province of Main*, and Territory of *Sagadahock*. A Wood Sloop with three Hands makes about 15 Voyages *per Ann.* from the Eastward to *Boston*, may carry about 30 Cord Fire Wood each Voyage." W. Douglass, *A Summary . . . of the British Settlements in North America*, ii. 68.

[2] Wiscasset Deeds, *passim*.

[3] See full lists in Massachusetts Archives, 117 and "Court Records," 24 (March, 1762).

ness, covered to the water's edge with those magnificent pines and other evergreens that afforded an apparently inexhaustible supply of the finest timber, especially masts and spars, in a day when masts and spars were a very real necessity. John Nutting set to work, either personally or by proxy, and in a few years was able to inventory his estates as:

"Two Houses to the Eastward of the Province of Massachusetts Bay £ 80"—

Two hundred acres & upwards of good Land in one of the most eligible situations in Penobscot purchased of the grantee[1] who possessed the same upwards of 20 years, more than 30 Acres of which is well cleared and under Improvement, the rest Wooded & Estimated at the least computation at 1000 —

One third part of a Saw Mill adjoining s^d Land at Penobscot 70 —

A Farm partly cleared & Improved by myself on Bagwiduce River, 500 Acres 100 —"[2]

He spent a good deal of money on this property and got considerable returns from it. In 1769 he had on one account with a brother housewright, Nathaniel Kidder of Medford, who was apparently acting as his agent, no less than £378 lawful money, including many cash pay-

[1] Apparently named Busy. Testimony of "Josiah Henny, late of Penobscot" before the Commissioners 29 December, 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xii. 302. Public Library, New York City. The printed copies, generally more accurate, give the name Bary. A. Fraser, Second Report, Bureau of Archives, Ontario, 59. Neither form has been otherwise identified.

[2] A composite of two schedules, one dated Halifax, 15 January, 1784, the other undated, but heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Both in Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

ments, the "fraight" on forty bushels of corn, thirty-one barrels, etc.[1]

But the year 1770 marks a sudden check in John Nutting's prosperous financial career, and somehow puts him in a hole from which he never completely extricated himself. He had been borrowing small sums from his father-in-law for a good while, and now had to mortgage his Cambridge property to him for £93.[2] Some of his Penobscot lands he had taken for bad debts,[3] and there may have been other sums owing to him not so well secured. At any rate he could not raise ready cash to meet his local creditors, and their suits when once begun came thick and fast.[4] Nathaniel Coolidge of Watertown brought suit against him in that year for lumber sold. In February, 1771, Kidder sued him for the "cash expended to the Eastward." In May the executor of Francis Dizer, "marriner" of Charlestown, sued him for promissory notes, probably on the same subject. In July Abijah Steadman, housewright, sued him on another note. In August John Smith, "taylor," sued

[1] Kidder *v.* Nutting, Middlesex Inferiour Court of Common Pleas, 1771. Original Files. In 1786 the charge for a passenger from Boston to Penobscot was 6 s. *Bangor Historical Magazine*, i. 58.

[2] Middlesex Deeds, 71/430.

[3] Testimony of Lieutenant John Nutting before the Commissioners, Halifax, 29 December, 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 303. Public Library, New York City.

[4] See original files of Middlesex Inferiour Court of Common Pleas. Clerk's Office, East Cambridge.

him for eight pair of breeches, sundry lambskins and buttons. (The babies were evidently growing up.) In September Nathaniel Prentice, chaisemaker, sued him on an agreement which is so characteristic of the business methods of that day that it may stand repetition:

"for that whereas the pl^{t} on ye fourth Day of January last, at Cambridge afores^{d} had agreed with & promised ye s^{d} John to make & deliver to him, on or before the twenty fifth Day of April then next, another good Chaise such an one as ye pl^{t} had before that time made for one Francis Moore, ye s^{d} John in consideration thereof then & there promised ye pl^{t} to build for ye plaintiff a good Frame for a Barn of thirty Feet square, fourteen feet posts, oak sills, to be to the Acceptance of one Sam^{ll} Choate & one John Walton & to be delivered at ye House of Joseph Miller of Charlestown on or before ye said twenty fifth of April, at ye price of Eleven pounds six shillings & Eight pence; and also to procure for ye pl^{t} another Frame twenty four feet in Length & twenty feet in Breadth with Oak Sills & fourteen feet posts, to be delivered at s^{d} prentice's Dwelling House in s^{d} Cambridge, on or before ye fifteenth Day of June then next at the price of Eight pounds & to be to the Acceptance of the s^{d} Choat and Walton, yet s^{d} Nutting has never delivered the last mentioned frame, nor ever paid the £6.13.4 . . ."

[Account annexed.]

"To a New Riding Chaise	£22. 0.0
Cr. By a Barn Frame £12 By a pair of Chaise Wheels £3.6.8.	15. 6.8
Ball'a due to N. prentice	6.13.4"

Nutting was evidently at his wits' end to raise money. He negotiated a second mortgage on his Cambridge property to his father-in-law, for £53.[1] He took at

[1] Middlesex Deeds, 72/104.

least one boarder.[1] Some of the suits he defaulted, others he contested on technicalities, and appealed, but did not prosecute the appeal. Occasionally he kept out of sight altogether, perhaps at Penobscot. In all the suits he lost his case. The amounts were generally trifling, and were probably settled by work at his trade. Kidder, whose claim was much the largest, actually proceeded to levy on Nutting's remaining interest in his twice-mortgaged house and lot, apparently conceded to be one-half:

> containing a cellar measuring nine fott and four inches . . . the west end of the house containing a Lower Room partly finished a Chamber also a Bed Chamber North of the Stairs unfinished also half the whole Garret unfinished with the one half of the Entry Ways and Stair Ways in the whole of the House.[2]

Prentice, in an attempt to find some property that could be come at by the time he began suit, attached Nutting's pew in the meeting-house: "One of the body Pews. the frunt passing [?] to Henry Prentice the back part to Owen Worlen the two Ends on two allyes."[3] From this time the unfortunate Nutting seems to have been an unchurched wanderer till he began attending

[1] Mr. Nathaniel Rust. See his testimony before the Commissioners, *supra*, p. 57, note. Also his affidavit "that he resided at Cambridge many years preceding the late War." Halifax, 15 January, 1784. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[2] Middlesex Deeds, 73/279.

[3] Prentice *v.* Nutting. Original Files, *ubi supra*.

Christ Church, just across the Common from his house. No doubt he already found his sympathies more with the Tory proprietors there than with the congregation in the meeting-house, with so many of whom he must have been by this time on bad terms. Even there he soon got into debt to the churchwardens, but in 1774 he was formally voted the rather unusual privilege of renting a pew, at 24/– per annum.[1]

And now we come to that memorable Thursday, the first of September, 1774, when the Revolution very nearly began at daybreak on Cambridge Common, and when John Nutting definitely cast in his lot with the supporters of law and order and the King's government. In his own words, "receiving an Intimation from Colonel Phipps (Sheriff of the County) of General Gage's intention to remove the Magazine of Powder deposited at that place to Boston; and soliciting the assistance of your Memorialist, he readily assisted; notwithstanding he had been previously importuned by a Mob to head them and prevent the Removal of it.[2] . . . which altogether with his open Avowal of principles of

[1] Christ Church Records.

[2] Memorial to the Commissioners. Heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London. Cf. his testimony before the Commissioners: " . . . altho' the Mob desired and insisted that as an Officer of Militia he should prevent the Ordnance from being removed." American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 287. Public Library, New York City.

CHRIST CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE

Loyalty, raised the resentment of the populace against him to such a Degree as obliged him to quit his House & Family, & take refuge in Boston, under the protection of the Kings Troops." [1]

In Boston, whither his family soon followed him, he found himself in mighty genteel company,[2] many of his richest and most prominent fellow townsmen having also made it convenient to get in closer touch with the authorities at about the same time or even earlier. From this point in his career indeed may be traced the beginnings of a knack of obtaining the friendship and confidence of the nobility and gentry that later developed to surprising proportions. To his credit it must be added that those friendships never seem to have been unmerited nor that confidence misplaced. Unlike so many of his fellow-Tories, whose firm adherence to the Crown was mainly evidenced by a prodigious capacity for running away, his own loyalty, as events soon proved, was of an extremely practical kind.

Boston was full of the King's troops, and more were arriving at short intervals. In the chill nights of the early autumn their tents were already becoming uncom-

[1] Memorial to Germain, "Read 22 Decr 77." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[2] "We have here Earls, Lords & Baronets, I assure you Names that sound Grand." Letter of Samuel Paine, Boston, Oct. 2–9, 1775. New England Historical and Genealogical Register, xxx. 371.

fortable, and the need of substantial housing for them soon became imperative. The authorities prudently forbore to billet the unwelcome visitors upon the town, and decided to build special barracks for them.[1]

The announcement of this design fell upon most unwilling ears. The dullest Bostonian could perceive that the erection of permanent barracks in his beloved and almost autonymous metropolis meant its degradation to the level of a mere garrison town. Moreover it was bruited on good authority that even if the present unhappy differences should be composed a garrison at Boston was to be maintained indefinitely, as a check on any possible future uprisings. The building of barracks immediately assumed the proportions of a grievance, adding one more to the already too plentiful stock of those commodities upon which the spirit of rebellion throve. Attempts therefore to begin the work were met with a most effective passive resistance of the local mechanics. A trial of the regimental carpenters under the chief engineer Montrésor proved such a failure that Gage took measures to secure workmen from New York. "It's my opinion," remarked the observant Mr. John Andrews in his diary, "if they are wise, they won't

[1] The printed accounts of the following episode are mainly to be found in P. Force, American Archives, 4th series, i. 802–821, and J. Andrews, Diary, *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, viii. 300. See also *Letters of Hugh Earl Percy*, who was in direct charge of the camp.

come." And as a matter of fact they did n't, but snug on Manhattan Island contented themselves with passing the usual patriotic resolutions.[1]

Whereupon, "in consequence of the favorable representations of Lieutenant Governor Oliver and Gen. Gage's earnest solliciitations," John Nutting came forward and stoutly undertook the unpopular post of master-carpenter, "being," as he afterwards boasted, "the first person of an American that entered into the King's service when the troubles began." His executive capacity was astonishing. In the midst of the general disaffection, by hook or crook he managed to secure some forty or fifty men,[2] and the barrack frames began to rise both on the Common and at the Neck. The sight was too much for the Selectmen. If they could not traverse the orders of the Governor, they could adopt indirect methods, and on September 24 they significantly resolved "that should the mechanicks or other inhabitants of this town assist the troops by furnishing

[1] Some came later, and a pretty set they were. A few days before the evacuation one of the Selectmen wrote: "The Inhabitants in the utmost distress, thro' fear of the Town being destroyed by the Soldiers, a party of New York Carpenters with axes going thro' the town breaking open houses, &c. Soldiers and sailors plundering of houses, shops, warehouses." Newell's Journal. *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 4th series*, i. 274.

[2] Memorial to Germain, "Read 22 Decr 77." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London. He later explained that he got them "from the Country." Testimony before Commissioners, Halifax, 29 Dec. 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 297. Public Library, New York City.

them with artificers labourers or materials of any kind to build barracks or other places of accommodation for the troops, they will probably incur the displeasure of their brethren, who may withhold their contributions for the relief of the town, and deem them as enemies to the rights and liberties of *America*."

Gage saw the trick, and immediately sent for the Selectmen, "seemed a great deal worried," and with plentiful profanity represented that the work must go on, as the regiments had to be lodged somewhere. The wily Selectmen replied that for their own part they should actually prefer to see the soldiers kept together in barracks under discipline rather than scattered irresponsibly about the town, but that they had to consider the attitude of the surrounding places. In truth this was extremely threatening. "If they are suffered to proceed," observed Mr. Andrews, as to the imported laborers, "the matter is settled with us, for it is with the greatest difficulty that the country are restrained from coming in even now." The Governor next interviewed "King" Hancock, begging him to get the vote reconsidered; but in vain, and on the 26th, "at four o'clock the workmen *all* pack'd up their tools and left the barracks, frames, &ca." The next day a combined meeting of the committees of all the neighboring towns voted not to supply the army with lumber, bricks, labor, or

in short anything but those provisions "which mere humanity requires."

Affairs were now apparently at a stand. But the master-builder was a man of resource. The ship carpenters from the fleet were pressed into service, while, acting no doubt on Nutting's knowledge of affairs "to the Eastward," an armed schooner was despatched to Halifax "for all the Artificers they can procure from there." Still the difficulties of the job were not over. On land the ship-carpenters proved in truth out of their element, "being very ignorant of the method of framing and indeed of any sort of work they wanted done," and had to be dismissed. Wages then unheard of were offered for a day's work — two dollars, three dollars, "or even any price at all" — but not a workman came forward.[1] Lumber soon became so scarce that it was hard to find boards enough to make even a coffin for the dead, to say nothing of a habitation for the living. A shipload of planks intended for Boston was seized by the rebels at Portsmouth, and got no farther. An old brick house at Point Shirley was torn down and turned into ill-constructed barrack chimneys. The troops were almost in mutiny for lack of their promised accom-

[1] Montrésor, the Chief Engineer, reported that in his department on October 1 "an addition was thought absolutely necessary of 1 master carpenter, 1 foreman carpenter, 20 carpenters," etc. J. Almon, Parliamentary Register, xi. 279.

modations, and several regiments had to remain aboard the transports they arrived in, made fast along the wharves. Somehow Nutting struggled on with the work till about the middle of October,[1] when a party of carpenters arrived from Portsmouth (probably secured "at the Eastward"), and the idle and hungry Boston workmen had their first sight of "scabs" on high wages taking the bread out of their mouths. This was the last straw, and the usual recourse of all strikers followed. Nutting was waylaid at night — but he shall tell the story in his own words, as found in his subsequent memorial to the Commissioners on Loyalists' Claims:

"Several members of the Rebel Committee called on him and used every perswasion and promised every advantage to induce him to quit the King's Works; but after finding their Entreaties without effect they proceeded to Violence; a Mob the next day having concealed themselves, seized on your Memorialist on his Way from thence to his Lodgings in Boston and after almost killing him put him on board a Boat under charge of Four men with directions to convey him to Cambridge to be examined by the Committee then sitting there; but, fortunately for your Memorialist, thro' perswasion and a small consideration they were prevailed on to set him at Liberty near Cambridge from whence he returned to his Duty at the Lines; in passing from whence to his Lodgings or otherways, General Gage was pleased in future to furnish him with a Party of Men to protect him from the Insults of the Inhabitants." [2]

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[1] Captain Evelyn notices the occurrence briefly in a letter dated 31 October, 1774. He adds that the man was by way of being hanged. Letters of Captain W. G. Evelyn, 39.

[2] Memorial to the Commissioners, heard 29 December, 1785, at Halifax. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

In some fashion therefore the barracks were finished, at least "at the lines," — those on the Common seem to have been given up, — and by November 16 they were occupied; none too soon, for the number of fatal cases of illness from exposure was already considerable. Nutting's work however continued. There was much to be done, not only on the fortifications under Montrésor, of the Engineers, but on gun-carriages, ammunition-wagons, etc. under Colonel Cleaveland of the Royal Artillery,[1] and perhaps on the long-suffering lighthouse, which was at last repaired and relit in December of 1775.[2] Press of business might well have been his excuse, if a polite one were needed, for his continued absence from home. By an odd retaliation in kind, his much encumbered house, or, as it was elegantly termed, "Seat in Cambridge in the Spring of the Year 1775 . . . was made a Barrack for the american Souldiers and much Damaged thereby."[3] It was later taken possession of by his ex-master, baker, father-in-law and mortgagee[4] John Walton, on a quite excusable

[1] See his certificate, London, 7 June, 1778. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[2] 23 December, 1775. Howe to Dartmouth. J. Almon, Parliamentary Register, xi. 271. At least one party of carpenters at work there was kidnapped by the provincials, but Nutting evidently was not included.

[3] Affidavits of John Walton, Cambridge, and Benjamin Walton, Reading. 29 October, 1788. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[4] And apparently also his successor as lieutenant of the Cambridge company. L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 408.

"Idea that Mr. Nutting's Family have cost him that much." [1]

Our loyal carpenter continued actively employed in Boston until within about six weeks of the evacuation. Then under orders from Captain Spry he removed, with his wife, six children, two 'prentices, and "about fourteen artificers" to Halifax, leaving, as it proved, his native heath forever, — leaving too a memory that rankled in the patriotic breast for many a long day. Small wonder that in the Proscription Act of October, 1778, he is one of the few Cambridge men specifically enumerated as having "left this state . . . and joined the enemies thereof . . . manifesting an inimical disposition . . . and a design to aid and abet the enemies thereof in their wicked purposes." [2]

His work at Halifax through that heart-breaking spring of 1776 can be easily imagined. If ever a housewright was needed, it was then and there. We are all familiar with the picture — the miserable little fishing village, with a proportion of foul dram-shops before which the typical western mining town seems a Shaker

[1] Claimant's testimony before the Commissioners. Halifax, 29 December, 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 300. Public Library, New York City. With characteristic assurance Nutting some years later demanded compensation for his Cambridge property to the tune of £735. See schedules mentioned on page 94.

[2] Province Laws, 1778–1779, 2nd Session, chapter 24.

settlement,[1] completely overwhelmed by the multitude of gently-nurtured refugees, whole families seated crying on the surf-beaten rocks without so much as a tent over their heads, lacking food, fuel, and above all shelter.[2] If it was not Nutting's idea it was at least characteristic of him to have devised the expedient of getting ashore the cabooses and deck-houses of the transports and converting them into whole streets of little huts.[3] We can fancy how vigorously he must have pushed forward the work. Cabins, sheds, camps, anything that the limited supply of lumber allowed, had to be run up as fast as possible, ruined cottages repaired and made tenantable, the dazed and drunken fishermen driven to work, the inefficient shipwrights from the fleet made the most of, something provided in the way of wharves and landing facilities, store-sheds, more barracks again, and what not.

The fortifications of the town too were in a perilous state. Although Halifax had already been termed "the northern key of His Majesty's American dominions" [4]

[1] One of the inhabitants wrote in 1760: "The business of one half the town is to sell rum, and the other half to drink it." T. C. Haliburton, *History of Nova Scotia*, ii. 13.

[2] Abigail Adams to John Adams, 21 April, 1776.

[3] E. P. Weaver, "Nova Scotia during the Revolution," American Historical Review, x. 67.

[4] Campbell to Hillsborough, 13 January, 1769; Provincial Archives, 43/67. Halifax.

and a royal dockyard established there, yet the defences had been allowed to go to rack and ruin; batteries were dismantled, gun-carriages decayed and guns on the ground. In fact the town lay practically "open to the country on every side." [1] At last the sudden military importance of the station and the persistent and disquieting rumors of an attack upon it [2] moved the home government to decided action, and the army estimates for 1776 contemplated an expenditure of nearly £1500 sterling on constructions and repairs there.[3] It was not an easy matter to get the work done. In that scattered and unskilled community, where a few years before two distillers, two hatters and a sugar-baker made up the entire manufacturing class,[4] it was next to impossible to obtain either materials or workmen. Again, however, Nutting appears to have done wonders, and among other feats to have built by August no less

[1] Legge to Dartmouth, 19 August, 1775; Provincial Archives, 44/76. Halifax.

[2] E. P. Weaver, "Nova Scotia during the Revolution," American Historical Review, x. 65.

[3] The items were divided among the "Square Store for Small Arms, the Long Store for Small Arms, Bedding Store, Laboratory, Ordinance Yard, Gun Taakling Store, Junk Store, Lumber Yard, Artillery Barracks, Armourer's Shop, Governor's Battery, South Gate Battery, South Five Gun Battery, North Five Gun Battery, and Inclosing Land reserved for his Majesty on the hill." J. Almon, Parliamentary Register, vi. 141. Judging by later plans of the city, not much of this work was actually accomplished.

[4] Francklin to Hillsborough, 11 July, 1768. J. Brymner, "Report on Canadian Archives, 1894," 287.

than ten large block-houses, each mounting sixteen guns.[1] We may safely assume that he earned his pay at Halifax "as Master Carpenter and Superintendant of Mechanics," "serving," as one of the officers present put it, "with Active Spirit and uncommon Loyalty."[2]

Moreover he soon found other methods of displaying these qualities. The year 1777 saw the most elaborate preparations which Great Britain took to suppress the rebellion. The great movement to isolate New England was not properly worked out in detail, but it did include some appreciation of the importance of diverting the attention of the revolutionists by demonstrations along the coastline, while the main columns operated inland. To the originators of the campaign "it was always clear in speculation that the Militia would never stay with Washington or quit their homes if the coast was kept in alarm."[3] Moreover it was necessary to clear the shores of the swarm of small privateers that infested the Gulf of Maine and played havoc with the Nova Scotia settlements and the communication between Halifax and New York.[4] Besides, there were rumors of a secret

[1] J. Almon, *The Remembrancer*, iv. 139.

[2] Certificate of Major John Small, 8 March, 1778. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[3] Knox to Germain, 31 October, 1778; Historical Manuscript Commission Reports, Various, vi. 153.

[4] Cf. J. Almon, *The Remembrancer*, iv. 139. E. P. Weaver, "Nova Scotia During the Revolution." American Historical Review, x. 69, etc.

expedition fitting out at Boston in June, to attack the British fort at the mouth of the St. John's in the Bay of Fundy.[1] From Halifax, therefore, an expedition was arranged "to Saint John's River to meet the garrison of Fort Cumberland and to proceed to Machias and destroy that nest of pirates, and afterwards to go to the east coast of New England towards Gouldsbury, to cause an alarm in favor of General Burgoyne." [2] The fleet operations were entrusted to Admiral Collier, and the troops were put under the command of John Small, the efficient organizer of the newly raised corps of Royal Highland Immigrants. For this expedition John Nutting's familiarity with the coast was of evident value, and, according to Small, he "did very chearfully and without any reward offer his Service as a Pilot or in any other way he could be of use for the Publick Service then carrying on;" and although "there was no pay allowed him on that Occasion," showed himself "a deserving good Subject, still ready & willing to exert himself as Such." [3]

Through no fault of his, however, the enterprise miscarried. The transports reached their destination with no errors in pilotage that we know of; but, in the words

[1] F. Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine*, 185.

[2] Massey to Howe, 26 November, 1777; Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 156.

[3] See note 2, page 70.

of the disgusted General Massey, commanding at Halifax,

after the Lieut. Governor and I had fix'd every appointment with good Guides at a great Expense for a Grand Stroke and while Major Small was prancing at St. John's River, the place of Rendezvous for the Troops from Cumberland and Windsor Sir George Collier stole out of Halifax, made a futile Attack at Machias, was most shamefully drove from thence . . . which prevented the Eastern Coast of New England from being Alarm'd which was my orders to Major Small, and which if they had been executed might have prevented the Misfortunes that attend'd lt. Genl. Burgoynes army, for it was at that critical time.[1]

The jealous and self-sufficient Collier, after some gasconading up and down the coast, retired to St. John's in September, where in October the expedition disintegrated without accomplishing a single one of its objects.

Explanations to the home government were certainly needed, and whether Nutting was entrusted with them, or sent as a witness, or went on his own initiative, is not clear. At all events he sailed immediately for England, taking with him his son John, now a likely lad nearly eight years old. Arriving in the old country, which must have seemed so new to him, he at once sought out his former superiors, the ex-governor and ex-lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, obtained written recommendations from them, dated 28 November, 1777, and drew up a memorial to Lord George Ger-

[1] Massey to Howe. Halifax, 15 March, 1778; Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 209.

main.[1] This document, compared with the usual lugubrious recitals of sufferings and insistent claims for compensation for the loss of fat fees or swollen salaries, with which the bulk of the loyalists flooded the government, is remarkably refreshing. After mentioning his undoubted services he states

> That your Memorialist has no wish to be supported in Idleness at the Charge of Government, but is willing and desirous to be further serviceable in the way of his Trade; and as Carpenters are wanted at New York, & probably in other parts of America, he is come to England in Hopes of obtaining such employment, & will be very ready to go out imediately, — With this view your Memorialist humbly Solicits your Lordships patronage & for further Information respecting his Character, Services & Sufferings he begs leave to refer your Lordship to the Right Honorable Lord Percy to his Excellency General Gage, to Lieutenant Governor Oliver, and other Officers both Civil and Military to whom the foregoing Transactions are well known.

This memorial was promptly transmitted by William Knox, Germain's under-secretary, to John Robinson of the Treasury Board, who took equally prompt action upon it. It bears the endorsement: "Read 22 Dec. 77 £50 advance & to be recommended to the Com'rs at New York." Such a substantial recognition of a man standing squarely on his own merits, in that heyday of influence and favoritism, shows better than any testimonials what manner of impression Mr. Nutting had already made in official circles.

[1] All to be found in Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

The fifty pounds was paid, but the recommendation to New York must have been somehow overlooked; for on 28 February, 1778, Nutting addressed another memorial [1] to Lord George, from "78 Lambs Conduit Street," asking for further assistance, as he is still out of employment. This was transmitted by Knox to the Treasury Board on March 16, received April 20, and not read till July 8; it bears the chilly endorsement "Nil." Not waiting for this result, with real Yankee persistence, Nutting addressed, May 8, a personal letter [2] to Lord North himself, referring to the memorial, and proceeding:

> I shall only presume to add, I desire not to eat the bread of Idleness, being able & willing to be employed, as formerly, in His Majesty's Service, where my Utility & perseverance is well known to the Generals, & Subordinate Officers that have served in America during the War — Many of whom are now in this Metropolis, & to whom I most gladly would Appeal.

This direct application to the man "higher up" was successful, though not in quite the manner anticipated, and Nutting received from the Board of Ordnance the appointment of Overseer of His Majesty's works at Landguard Fort.[3]

This post, on the outermost verge of the East Anglian

[1] Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Memorial to the Commissioners, heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

coast, protecting the harbor of Harwich, the first considerable estuary north of the Thames, had long been considered of great importance. Just at this period, when war had recently been declared with Holland, it was receiving special attention. The marshy wastes beside it made an admirable proving ground for big guns, as well as an admirable location for a wholesomely impressive display of force. Accordingly from 1776 for a number of years extensive experiments were conducted there on a great many forms of ordnance shipped by water from Woolwich — experiments almost as instructive (though not as dangerous) to the Dutch luggers hovering off the coast as to the manipulators of untried types of the tricky cast-iron cannon of that day. The fort itself was neither as strong nor as commodious [1] as its importance warranted. During this time it was much enlarged, and also strengthened in flank and rear by a very elaborate system of defence works, under the direction of Lord Townshend, Master General of the Ordnance.[2] So extensive were these constructions that two overseers were required. Nutting, however, was the chief, receiving £91.5/- per annum, or five shillings

[1] In 1777 its complete establishment was only 87 men, all told. J. Almon, Parliamentary Register, viii. 185.

[2] J. H. Leslie, *History of Landguard Fort*, 76 *et seq.* One of the new redoubts was named the Raynham, after his Norfolk county-seat.

a day, while John Jones, his assistant, had only £73.[1] As the additions included a number of new barracks, we may well believe that he felt quite in his element.

Yet he found time to show himself in town occasionally, and to cultivate his acquaintance with Knox. With this active and important official he was now on surprisingly intimate terms, whether from the favorable representations of others or from sheer native ability and address. One likes to think the latter, and to imagine the Cambridge carpenter haunting the office of the under-secretary with his petitions and memorials until he comes into notice by his energetic ways, coupled with that winning and persuasive manner that had served him in such good stead one night during the siege of Boston, in a boat on the Charles with four angry journeymen. At any rate, Nutting actually becomes a figure in the councils of the British Empire at one of its greatest crises — an adviser of generals and a *protégé* of lords, — under the following circumstances:

Knox had been from the first obsessed with the importance of planting a British force on the coast of Maine. Besides its effects in distracting attention, a post there, he argued,[2] would give a station for the King's cruisers much nearer than Halifax, would cover

[1] J. Almon, Parliamentary Register, xvi. 511.

[2] Knox to Cooke, Ealing, 27 January, 1808. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Various, vi. 227.

the Bay of Fundy and Nova Scotia from molestation by sea, would prevent any land attack on what later became New Brunswick, and would even protect Lower Canada. Furthermore, it would form the nucleus and bulwark for a new province,[1] towards which might be directed the stream of refugees who were leaving the colonies and already driving the home government to distraction. He had even gone so far as to arrange the details for this modern Canaan. Lying between New England and "New Scotland," it was to be christened New Ireland,[2] perhaps in delicate reference to Knox's own nationality. Its governor was to be Thomas Hutchinson, its chief justice Daniel Leonard, its clerk of the council John Calef, the leading local tory, and its bishop (for *this* colony was to have a bishop willy-nilly) Dr. Henry Caner, formerly of King's Chapel, Boston. This "most preposterous measure," wrote Hutchinson from London,[3] " . . . is his own scheme, and few people

[1] The idea was not new. Even the original settlers were anxious, or were represented to be anxious, to have a government of their own, and Bernard fomented the proposition. But wiser heads would have none of it. J. Calef, *Siege of the Penobscot*, Postscript. Historical Manuscripts Commission, Dartmouth Papers, ii. *passim*. Franklin to Cushing, London, 7 July, 1773. B. Franklin, Writings (ed. Smyth), vi. 80.

[2] This was not the first effort toward the hibernization of Maine. In the previous generation Robert Temple had formed a brilliant but unsuccessful plan to settle an Irish colony near Bath. L. D. Temple, *Some Temple Pedigrees*, 6.

[3] T. Hutchinson, Diary, 19 September, 1778, and 20 October, 1779. Hutchinson's name was soon dropped in this connection.

here think well of it." Germain was at first among the disbelievers, but Knox finally "accomplished what he had been endeavouring" and brought his chief round to his opinion.

Then came the great question: Where should the post be located? Falmouth, Long Island, Townsend, Great Deer Island, — all were under discussion. Here John Nutting was called into the consultation. Mindful of his own "eligible" acres, and doubtless recognizing too the natural strength and strategic advantages [1] of the place (which events both past and future amply corroborated), with a fine mixture of self-interest and loyalty he suggested Penobscot. Yankee shrewdness and eloquence prevailed. His Majesty's ministers fell in with the suggestion,[2] and Nutting, "in Consequence of pointing out Government (by Mr. Knoxes desire) some places that might be taken advantageous to

[1] "The harbor is spacious, accessible, and secure, none in the neighborhood can be compared with it. . . . No country could afford greater supply of masts and spars for the Royal navy. Nor could any station afford equal convenience for annoying in time of war, yea, annihilating the commerce of New England." W. Ballard, "Castine, 1815." Bangor Historical Magazine, ii. 45.

[2] The current Boston explanation was that the failure of Massachusetts "to supply the eastern people [with food] as they had done during the war" had produced a disaffection which the local tories had made the most of in persuading the inhabitants generally "to join in a petition to the enemy to come and take possession of the place." James Sullivan to John Sullivan, Boston, 30 August, 1779. T. C. Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, ii. 376. The explanation suggests a certain guiltiness in the New England conscience.

Government was on the 30th August, 1778, ordered from Landguard Fort to London by express to go out with despatches to America . . . from the Right Honorable Lord George Germain's office to Sir Henry Clinton at New York." [1] His special part in the enterprise was, as he announced openly at London, "to be employed as overseer of carpenters who are to rebuild the Fort at Penobscot," [2] originally erected by the Sieur de Castine, and left in ruins when the French abandoned that district in 1745.[3]

But in the execution of this ingenious method of protecting his cherished property "to the Eastward" an incidental divertissement of some magnitude awaited its author. Leaving John Jr. at school in London, and receiving his despatches dated at Whitehall 2 September, 1778,[4] he posted down to Falmouth and embarked, with £50 worth of "Sea Stock necessary for the Voyage" and "some valuable Books on Fortification & Architecture and Instruments," [5] aboard the *Harriet*,

[1] Memorial to the Treasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[2] T. Hutchinson, Diary, 3 September, 1778.

[3] *Cf.* G. A. Wheeler, *History of Castine.* J. Williamson, *History of Maine,* etc.

[4] Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 284.

[5] Account annexed to memorial to Treasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

one of the government mail packets.[1] A fortnight out, having got no farther than lat. 49° long. 22°, they were sighted by the brigantine *Vengeance*, American privateer, Wingate Newman of Newburyport master. He at once gave chase.[2] The *Harriet* was a fast sailer, as befitted her employment, but the Yankee was a larger ship, specially fitted for her business, and brand new to boot. After a six hours' pursuit Newman got within range and opened fire. Sampson Sprague, commander of the packet, replied gallantly, but his little three-pounders and crew of forty-five were no match for the six-pounders and the hundred men of the privateer. Within pistol-shot the latter threw in a broadside that obliged the *Harriet* to strike, having one man killed and six wounded. Among the latter was Nutting, whom we can well imagine in the very thick of the fight, for he

[1] This craft had quite a prominent part in the transport and mail service. She is frequently mentioned in contemporary documents.

[2] 17 September, 1778. Members of both ships' companies have left accounts of this affair. For the American, see Journal of Samuel Nye, Surgeon of the Vengeance, E. V. Smith, *History of Newburyport*, 116; for the English, see affidavit of Ab'm Forst, Halifax, 15 January, 1784. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London. I suspect this Forst, like Rust, was one of Nutting's loyal apprentices who followed his master's fortunes. If we can twist the name into Abraham Frost, we not only have the Cambridge man, born 1754, enumerated by L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge*, 554–555, but also have an explanation why "this fam. prob. rem. as no further trace of them is found." For other details of the capture of the *Harriet*, see J. J. Currier, *History of Newburyport, Mass.*, i, 629. *London Chronicle*, 22–24 October, 1778: E. S. Maclay, *History of American Privateers*, 117. C. H. Lincoln, *Naval Records of the American Revolution*, 113.

was hit "in four places." [1] Nevertheless he managed to sink his despatches, which he "declared were of great consequence to him," as indeed they were. The mails also were thrown overboard just in time. The *Harriet's* people were taken aboard the *Vengeance*, stripped of their effects, and landed at Corunna,[2] the nearest point on the Spanish coast, but a most unusual prize port. By an agreement [3] between the British Consul there and Captain Newman the prisoners were exchanged and allowed to pass unmolested to England again. In about six weeks Nutting accordingly arrived at Falmouth once more (fare twelve guineas), having lost £120 worth of personal outfit, and being put to an expense of £20 for surgeons, nurses and medical attendance, and wended his way by postchaise (fare £15) back to London.[4] It was now too late in the season to do anything more

[1] Claimant's evidence before the Commissioners, Halifax, 29 December, 1785. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 298, Public Library, New York City.

[2] It is a strange freak that makes John Nutting's wanderings intersect the military termini of Sir John Moore, who entered active service at Penobscot and left it at Corunna. *British Plutarch*, 243.

[3] 1 October, 1778. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 307. It is a family tradition that Nutting's high rank in Freemasonry procured his "escape" from a Spanish prison. W. F. Parker, *Life of Daniel McNeill Parker*, 12. But while this advantage may account for various other fortunate turns in his history, it does not need to be invoked here.

[4] Account of Expenses annexed to memorial to the Treasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

about New Ireland. Even Knox, its sponsor, wrote: "Poor Nutting and the Penobscott orders have missed their way for this year, and I fear something will happen to prevent our taking possession of that country in the spring." [1]

All the same, he determined to have another try at his plan, and to have it early and by the same hands. In the beginning of January, 1779, Mr. Nutting received a fresh set of despatches, and was "order'd out again to America the second time before his Wounds were well, experiencing a long and tedious Passage of ffourteen Weeks to New York, on the *Grampus* ship of war" [2] (this time taking a safer conveyance). Clinton had by now got general intimations of the plan, and some correspondence [3] had passed between him and General McLean, the new commander at Halifax, on the subject. McLean was personally ignorant [4] of the shoreline, and had been consulting Captain Mowatt, his naval officer. The latter recommended taking post at Falmouth, the scene of his most notorious exploit, to

[1] Knox to Germain. Bath, 31 October, 1778. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Various, vi. 153–4.

[2] Memorial to the Treasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[3] Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 381, 393, etc.

[4] This ignorance was merely practical, for the magnificent series of charts by Des Barres had already been published.

which he doubtless longed to give the finishing touches. Detailed instructions, however, were brought by Nutting, and Clinton, by orders dated 13 April,[1] directed McLean to proceed and fortify a post on Penobscot River, — rather to the disappointment of all the officers concerned.

McLean seems to have put full confidence in the "chearful Pilot," and prompt preparations were made. On May 16th the detachment was reported ready. At the end of that month the transports sailed, covered by Mowatt and a few inefficient men-of-war. In the middle of June the fleet came up Penobscot Bay, and after several days' general reconnoissance cast anchor off the little peninsula that ever since 1506 had been a recognized strategic centre round which an almost continuous struggle for supremacy had revolved.[2]

On the 26th the landing began, the troops looking about them "as frightened as a flock of sheep," [3] and John Nutting doubtless hastened to inspect his farm, woodland, and mill, now to be so handsomely protected against possible rebel molestation. Yet he could give

[1] Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, i. 415. See also 436, 458, etc., for many of the following details.

[2] Cf. G. F. Clark, "Military Operations at Castine," Worcester Society of Antiquity, Proceedings for 1889, 18 — a good general account of all the martial doings there, including a far earlier attack and repulse of the Massachusetts forces.

[3] "Hutchings's Narrative." G. A. Wheeler, *History of Castine*, 322.

little time to his private affairs just then, for the military position must be made good at once:

> The Provisions, Artillery and Engineer Stores and the equipage of the troops, being landed on the Beach, must be carried to the Ground of the fort chiefly by the labor of the men against the ascent, there being only a Couple of small teams to Assist in it. The ground & all the Avenues to it, was to be examined, cleared from wood, and at the same time guarded. Materials were to be collected & prepared. And the defences, as well as every convenience of the fort, were to be reared.[1]

The ruins of the French fort were apparently disregarded, and an entirely new one was laid out. The official engineer was Captain Harteup;[2] but his plans proved defective and had to be altered, probably by the master-carpenter. There were other delays too, and it was July 2d before the lines were actually staked and work begun.[3] The local inhabitants were divided in their attitude, as everywhere else. Some stoutly proclaimed their adherence to the United States of America, and when approached with the oath of allegiance made good their words by packing their scanty possessions and departing into the backwoods. Others to the

[1] Mowatt's "Relation," Magazine of History, Extra Number 11 (1910), 49.

[2] Elsewhere spelled, and doubtless pronounced, Hardcap. In like manner Mowatt becomes Moat; and Calef masquerades as Calf. Rather oddly, Harteup's next assignment was to Landguard Fort. W. Porter, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers*, i. 215.

[3] McLean to Clinton, Camp at Majebigwaduce, 23 August, 1779. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, ii. 14.

number of a hundred showed their willingness by assisting to clear the ground round the fort, etc. A simple rectangular structure of logs and earthwork two hundred feet on a side[1] with corner bastions and a central blockhouse was laid out, a "shade" erected for the provisions, the powder "lodged in covered holes dug in the proposed glacis," a ditch cut across the isthmus, and the work pushed forward with a will.

The expected attack was not long in coming. Of the consternation and indignation of Massachusetts at this invasion of her territory, of the feverish fitting-out of the Penobscot Expedition, "by far the largest naval undertaking of the Revolution made by the Americans," there is no need to tell here in detail. Well known too is the story of the arrival of that formidable Yankee fleet off the little peninsula before the fort was half completed, the extraordinary indecision of the ensuing siege, and its shameful termination.

Rarely has a more ignominious military operation been made by Americans. Had it been successful, it would not have been worth the effort it cost. Its object had no national significance; it was an eccentric operation. Bad in conception, bad in preparation, bad in execution, it naturally ended in disaster and disgrace.[2]

A prodigious wreck of property, a dire eclipse of reputation, and universal chagrin were the fruits of this expedition, in the promotion

[1] This was the inside measurement. That mentioned by Ballard — 14 perches (= 231 feet) — was evidently the measurement outside the glacis.

[2] C. O. Paullin, *The Navy of the American Revolution*, 347, 352.

of which there had been such an exalted display of public spirit both by government and individuals.[1]

Among the twenty transports destroyed was the whole trading fleet of the State. Destroyed also were thirteen privateers, temporarily taken into the State service. Among these was the *Vengeance*, then in command of Captain Thomas; and though the phrase "poetic justice" may not have been known to Mr. Nutting, the sight of his old captor blazing and crackling on the Penobscot flats must have been the sweetest moment of the campaign to her ex-prisoner.[2]

Concerned as we are with but one figure in the story, we must admit that the master-carpenter all this time seems to have lain extremely low. Indeed, for the only time in his history it is recorded that his workmen did not "pay proper attention" to him. We get one glimpse of him accompanying a party sent for lumber up the

[1] J. Williamson, *History of Maine*, ii. 476. In the opinion of well-informed British officers taking part in this affair the results strikingly justified many of Knox's theories. "The attack on Penobscot . . . was positively the severest blow received by the American Naval force during the War. The trade to Canada, which was intended, after the expected reduction of the Post of Penobscot, to be intercepted by this very armament, went safe that Season: The New England Provinces did not for the remaining period of the contest recover the loss of Ships, and the Expence of fitting out the Expedition: Every thought of attempting Canada, & Nova Scotia, was thenceforth laid aside, and the trade & Transports from the Banks of Newfoundland along the Coast of Nova Scotia, &c: enjoyed unusual Security." Captain Henry Mowatt's "Relation," *Magazine of History*, Extra Number 11 (1910), 53.

[2] E. S. Maclay, *History of American Privateers*, 118.

Bagaduce River, perhaps to his own wood-lot.[1] But his peculiarly personal interest in the occupation and defence of the place had of course transpired, and when during the siege things seemed almost hopeless for His Majesty's forces [2] his situation was one demanding as much self-effacement as his nature was capable of. In a subsequent enumeration of his sufferings at Penobscot he mentions not only "enduring a Seige of Twenty Days, the fitagues of establishing a New Fort," but also "the part he had to act, and the reflexions thrown out against him by numbers of the officers when they were informed your Memorialist was the cause of their being carried there, under an idea that he had sold them to the Rebels, with the anxiety that must attend him, is more sensibly felt than expressed." [3] His attitude even partook of duplicity. Admiral Collier wrote to General Clinton, August 24, 1779, after the smoke of battle had somewhat cleared away, expressing his strong disap-

[1] Orderly Book of William Lawrence, Serjeant Royal Artillery, July 17, 1779, and August 30. *Bangor Historical Magazine*, v. 146 *et seq.* A typical smack of the region is given in the disagreeable orders for September 17, that the commissary must thereafter "deliver out rice in lieu of pies."

[2] When the provincials effected their first landing on the peninsula, McLean was so sure all was up that he stood by the flagstaff halliards himself, ready to strike his colors. "Hutchings's Narrative." G. A. Wheeler, *History of Castine*, 323. Cf. a racy letter from E. Hazard, Jamaica Plain, 22 March, 1780. *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, iv. 129.

[3] Memorial to the Treasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

probation of establishing a post at this dreary rebellious place, and adding:

> That fellow Nutting whom yr. Exe'y remembers at New York has just been with me on a message; I asked him what coud possibly induce him to recommend the establishing a settlement in such a place, & what advantages might be expected from it? He denied his having ever recommended the measure to Lord G. Germain, nor coud I learn from him what particular benefits woud accrue to us, by keeping possession of so infernal a spot.[1]

Nevertheless, the value of Nutting's aid was officially and handsomely recognized. McLean certified that he "served under my Command on the Expedition to Penobscot much to my satisfaction, on my taking post there. I appointed him Overseer of Works, which duty he performed with Zeal and fidelity to the King's service."[2] General Campbell, who was left in command of the place, "in consideration of his Attatchment to His Majesty's Government," made a "Gratuious Grant" to Mrs. Nutting of "a lot of Land to settle upon . . . on the N. E. Side of ye Road Leading to Fort George, formerly the Property of Joseph Pirkins now in Rebellion."[3] As it was evident that he could not return

[1] Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, ii. 18. In his more self-assertive and characteristic moments he made no bones of claiming, in true carpenter's spelling, that "that Expedition was planed at his Recommendation." Testimony before the Commissioners. American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 298. Public Library, New York City.

[2] Certificate, Halifax, 16 May, 1780. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[3] Fort George, Penobscot, 21 June, 1781. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

to Cambridge, the Overseer seems to have regarded this lot in the light of a homestead; upon it he built a house which he valued at £150.

The success of this little invasion was quite extraordinary.[1] It was so dwelt upon by the British, who had not overmuch in that line to offer, that it drew the satire of Horace Walpole on the "destruction of a whole navy of walnut shells at a place as well known as Pharsalia called Penobscot,"[2] and sundry ingenious gentlemen came forward to share the honor of its authorship or to offer suggestions for improving on the situation.[3] It was a bitter pill for the pride of the old Bay State, and the fiasco which had permitted it to continue was as a draught of wormwood to wash it down withal. Baffled and resourceless, the Massachusetts Council bethought themselves of the great provincial panacea, and rushed blindly for aid to the one man who never lost his head. Washington in a stern letter, dated 17 April, 1780, pointed out the impossibility of any successful recapture of the place in the then desperate circumstances of the

[1] Cf. i. T. Jones, New York during the Revolution, 297.

[2] Walpole to Countess of Ossory, 24 September, 1779,

[3] The domineering Col. Thomas Goldthwait hastened to New York to offer his services to Clinton in raising a regiment to defend the post. ii. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, 20, 45. He wrote to Admiral Arbuthnot to the same effect. H. M. C. R., Stopford-Sackville Papers, ii. 149. Strange to say, he too owned extensive tracts in the vicinity. Maine Historical Magazine, ix. 23.

whole military establishment. No troops could be spared except the militia, who, he cuttingly observed, if defeated, would "escape with difficulty, no doubt with disgrace." Nor, he reminded them, could such an attempt be made without a naval force, the total lack of which (thanks to themselves, he might have added) was fast becoming a fatal defect on the American side.[1]

Luckily for the republicans that indispensable factor was soon supplied by their French allies. During the spring of 1781, while the British fleet was busy in the Chesapeake and the French squadron idle at Newport, the Massachusetts men saw a golden opportunity. Their proposals were favorably received by Destouches, who agreed to furnish five vessels, while Rochambeau was to supply six hundred infantry, for an attack on Penobscot. Massachusetts was to contribute a force of militia, but broke down; and Washington quietly advised Rochambeau to put no trust in this part of the agreement, but to proceed himself as speedily and secretly as possible. After much preparation Destouches decided that the naval risk was too great, and all was abandoned.[2]

[1] Washington to President of Congress, 17 April, 1780.

[2] Washington to Rochambeau, 10 April, 1781. Cf. J. Sparks, *Writings of Washington*, viii. 10, note.

Yet the instinct of Massachusetts was that of the she-bear robbed of her cub. The next summer Vaudreuil anchored his great fleet in Nantasket Roads, and Governor Hancock appealed to him to strike a *coup de main* at "that troublesome post" whither John Nutting had led the King's troops. The admiral seemed to approve, and the governor made some preparations on his own account. But the general of the allies disapproved, and Washington supported his view. Thus for the fourth time was Massachusetts foiled in her attempt to regain the conquered portion of her own territory.[1]

Still, regularly as the year came round, the thoughts of the Bay State turned to Penobscot. On 8 February, 1783, the Legislature addressed a letter to Washington on the same old subject, "a post too beneficial to them and too dangerous to the safety of this and the other states in the Union to suffer us to remain indifferent, passive observers of their measures." With a doubtful regard for historical accuracy, the writers represented that since the defeat of the State expedition "our whole attention from that period to the present has been drawn from our own and fixed on the more dangerous and distressed situation" of the more southern colonies, but "that as the enemy have now left the southern states, and as there is no particular object that seems to

[1] Washington to Hancock, 10 August, 1782.

engage the attention of the army," it would be a good time to send enough regiments "to dispossess the enemy or at least such a number as will confine them to their present possessions," as "we are apprehensive that they will in the spring take possession of the river Kennebeck." [1]

Washington patiently replied that if peace was soon declared there would be no need of further attention to Penobscot; but if not, all efforts must be concentrated in a final attack on New York. And Massachusetts had to rest content with his suggestive statement that he should always be ready to concur in any "judicious" plan for retaking the eastern frontiers, "a territory whose utility is very deeply impressed upon me." [2]

Amidst these wars and rumors of wars the garrison at Penobscot were constantly on the alert. They continued their defensive works until "the viperine nest," [3] as the patriots feelingly termed it, was reported to be "the most regularly constructed and best finished of any in America." [4] Frequent forays were made into the surrounding settlements, and not a few distinguished Sons of Liberty were temporarily deprived of their birth-

[1] Massachusetts Archives, "Court Records," 44/304.

[2] Head Quarters, Newburgh, 22 Feb., 1783. Massachusetts Archives, "Letters, 1780–1788." 136.

[3] *Maine Historical Society Collections and Proceedings*, 2d Series, i. 397.

[4] Washington to Vaudreuil, 10 August, 1782.

right and placed in durance vile at the central block-house.[1] Several of these energetic gentry, however, contrived to penetrate Mr. Nutting's handiwork and depart in peace, if not with honor. Use also was made of the excellent harbor. The naval force was constantly changing. Vessels of war, transports, victuallers, privateers, and their prizes, made the scene busy and occasionally exciting; as when the dashing Preble, in a night attack, cut out an English brig lying close to shore and escaped without a scratch,[2] or Capt. George Little, by a daring stratagem, accomplished a similar feat.[3]

During this period many loyalists removed to this haven of refuge, and a sort of New Ireland *de facto* began

[1] Among them, General Cushing, of Pownalboro, General Wadsworth, of Thomaston, Daniel, brother of General Sullivan, etc. See Calef, Wheeler, Williamson, etc. It is an instructive example of the astounding distortion of the average American "history," to note the shrieks of protest against the *inhumanities* and *outrages* practised by the British — how Mowatt once threatened a rebellious native with his sword, etc. — while brutalities of the Colonials, like Wadsworth's summary hanging of a miserable half-witted tory guide, are passed over in silence, or condoned as unfortunate necessities of war.

[2] J. Williamson, "British Occupation of Penobscot." *Maine Historical Society Collections and Proceedings.* 2d Series, i. 395.

[3] Hutchings's Narrative" G. A. Wheeler, *History of Castine*, 327. C. Eaton, *History of Thomaston*, Maine, i, 134. Cf. payment of May 24, 1781, "To Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell of the 71st foot, for the losses sustained by the George transport being taken by the rebels £39.18. . . ." J. Almon, *Parliamentary Register*, xxiv, 639. From the same source we learn that £21 was considered sufficient remuneration "to Capt. Alexander Campbell of the 74th foot for the cure of his thigh, which was broke at Penobscott, in June, 1779."

to take shape. By the end of the war the settlement had grown from half a dozen huts to thirty-seven houses, some of two stories, with wharves, stores, etc., all the product of loyal hands.[1] Another petition was sent to England asking to have the separate government established.[2] The authority of Massachusetts, despite her asseverations, was so thoroughly broken that "no place eastward of Penobscot was called upon for taxes or contributions after this [expedition] till the close of the war"; although this exemption was carefully explained as due to tender consideration of the sufferings the inhabitants underwent from the British.[3]

In brief, then, futile as the original idea may have been in theory, in practice the occupation of Penobscot had turned out a surprising success; Knox, with some show of reason, plumed himself upon "my plan" and its results.[4]

And how fared John Nutting, the humble *causa causans* of it all? During the winter and spring of 1779–80 he seems to have been pretty well occupied with the care of his own and his Majesty's property at Castine. His wife had joined him there soon after the siege, and there little Sophia Elizabeth was born, 23 September,

[1] Mass. Archives, 145, 377.
[2] J. Calef, *Siege of the Penobscot*, 40.
[3] J. Williamson, *History of Maine*, ii, 481, note.
[4] W. Knox, Extra-Official State Papers, ii, 60.

1780.[1] But farming and small garrison work were too tame for our budding strategist, and encouraged by the local sentiment he began to nurse the idea of repeating his former success with the ministry. General McLean also had theories of his own for the military dispositions along the Maine coast; between the two, if appearances are to be trusted, another scheme was hatched for the favorable consideration of Mr. Knox. At least, in the spring of 1780, Nutting, "by the General's particular advice and recommendation, Embarked again for England," [2] where he soon announced that he had "laid a Plan before the Right Honourable Lord George Germain which if put into Execution he is clear would be of the greatest Utility to Government." [3]

The details of that plan do not appear. We may have an echo of it in the insistence with which Germain the next winter urged upon Clinton the ministry's favorite scheme for the disposition of the throngs of Tories at New York:

> Many . . . are desirous of being settled in the country about Penobscot . . . and, as it is proposed to settle that country, and this appears a cheap method of disposing of these loyalists, it is wished you

[1] Nutting Papers. She married Michael B. Grant, 10 July, 1800, and bore him eight children ere his death in 1817. She herself died in 1862.

[2] Memorial to the Commissioners, heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[3] Memorial to the Teasury, "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

would encourage them to go there under the protection of the Associated Refugees, and assure them that a civil government will follow them in due time; for I hope, in the course of the summer, the admiral and you will be able to spare a force sufficient to effect an establishment at Casco Bay, and reduce that country to the King's obedience.[1]

At all events the imminence of this projected attack on Portland was sufficient to cause some very earnest preparations to be made by the inhabitants there.[2]

It may have been only a coincidence, but soon after Nutting's arrival in London an astonishing impetus was given to the whole New Ireland scheme. Germain wrote to Knox, 7 August, 1780: "I hope *New Ireland* continues to employ your thoughts: the more I think of Oliver (Chief Justice of Massachuset's Bay), for governor, the more I like him. . . . I wish we might prepare some plan for the consideration of the Cabinet."[3] A hint was enough for Knox, and with suspicious speed the plan was produced. Four days later a full-blown constitution for the new province was a reality,[4] and Germain wrote: "*The King approves of the plan* . . . likes Oliver for Governor, so it may be offered him.

[1] Whitehall, 7 March, 1781 (intercepted). J. Sparks, *Writings of Washington*, viii. 521.

[2] Campbell to Clinton, Ft. George, Penobscot, 15 March, 1781. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, ii. 258. Cf. J. Williamson, *History of Maine*, ii. 481, etc.

[3] W. Knox, Extra-Official State Papers. Appendix, ii. 82.

[4] Discussed and compared in G. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, x. 368.

He approves of Leonard for Chief Justice."[1] Yet here a most provoking obstacle arose. Wedderburn, the Attorney-General, in a pet, according to the disgruntled Knox,[2] at seeing his legal rival, Lord Thurlow, raised to the peerage before himself,[3] refused to sanction the proposition, declaring that no new province could be interposed between two old ones whose charters gave them a coterminous boundary.

Whether Nutting had much or little to do with all this, he reached England unfortunately "at the time of the Riots in London,[4] was detained contrary to his expectation, and received a peremptory order from Lord Townsend to proceed immediately to Landguard Fort. His Lordship being pleased to declare that Your Memorialist could not be spared out of the Kingdom at that time."[5] Work at Landguard was then in full swing, as the English coast towns were not only threatened by the Dutch and Spanish fleets but still sweating from the fear of that bogy-man of the sea, John P. Jones.

[1] W. Knox, Extra-Official State Papers, Appendix, ii. 83.

[2] Knox to Cooke, Ealing, 27 January, 1808. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Various, vi. 228.

[3] This explanation seems a bit tenuous. The invidious promotion had been made over two years before, and Wedderburn was himself by this time safely within the charmed circle as Baron Loughborough. Still, there were doubtless wheels within wheels.

[4] The Gordon Riots began 2 June, 1780.

[5] Memorial to the Commissioners, heard 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

Thus side-tracked among the East Anglian marshes, his finances being again very low, "having expended the whole of his pay, and being considerably more indebted than when he set out which he is wholly unable to pay although he has used the greatest Oeconomy, not being able to return a Compliment of asking a Friend to Dinner," Nutting composed a memorial [1] to the Treasury Board, asking for reimbursement for £394 worth of expenses incurred since leaving Landguard in 1778, "with such other gratuity, as your Lordships shall think fit." This he followed up by a straightforward letter [2] to Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury, who it appears had made a "kind promis to speak to My Lord North" in his behalf. Herein he begs for "one hundred or even seventy pounds" which "would set me free from that anxeiety of mind every honest man ought to have to pay his Just depts though incured for the service of Government." He refers for his "carecture, & services," to "the Rt. Hon'bl Lord Germain, or Mr. Knox; to whom I have the honour to be well known." He was evidently determined that the family orthography should improve, for he adds a "P. P. (*sic*) the berer is my son who is at school in London, & shall wait on your honour when most convenient, for an answare."

[1] Endorsed: "Rec'd 13 Mar. 1781." Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 75, Public Record Office, London.

[2] Landguard Fort, 5 October, 1780. *Ibidem.*

That "answare" was long in coming. The frightfully overburdened treasury did not reach action on this appeal till a year and a half later. Then, after various wanderings in the official maze, it was returned to "Sir" Grey Cooper, the new Secretary of the Treasury, by the ever-friendly Knox, with the statement that "£300 is judged a proper compensation for Mr. Nutting's extraordinary expenses." [1] This sum the Treasury would consent to pay only on *receiving back* the £150 already allowed Nutting as an American sufferer, "to be applied again to the payment of American sufferers." [2]

Ere this the ministry had changed and Nutting's old patrons were no longer in power. But he had already secured new ones — among them the Duke of Richmond, Master General of Ordnance. By that dignitary, soon after his exchequer had received the above addition, and "as soon as the disturbances subsided," he was appointed engineer,[3] and was once again ordered out to New York, taking John Junior with him, "to follow such Directions as he might receive from His

[1] Knox to Cooper, Whitehall, 14 March, 1782. *Ibidem.*

[2] Endorsements on above memorial.

[3] So at least he says in his memorial to the Commissioners, heard 29 December, 1785. Probably a "practitioner engineer," a rank then just going out of use. Cf. W. Porter, *History of the Royal Engineers*, i. 202. The family tradition is that he was a captain in that corps, but his name is not found under that heading in the Army Lists and the title is probably confused with his son's. At all events, he seems to have soon quit the job. See *post.*

Excellency Sir Guy Carleton."[1] His arrival is chronicled in a letter from Carleton to his Grace dated 17 November, 1782:

> Mr. Nutting and his son, whom Your Grace mentioned to me, arrived here. I shall immediately employ the father according to his wish at Penobscot [*sic*], and as soon as an opportunity offers, provide for the son who I have in the meantime directed shall serve under the Chief Engineer, who will take care of him.[2]

The commander-in-chief acted with a promptness that shows how much "influence" was behind the Cambridge man. A few days later his pecuniary cloud showed a further silver lining in the shape of a payment of another £100 "for services to Government";[3] and on 1 December, young John was satisfactorily provided for, by an appointment as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery.[4]

Nutting's wish to be employed at Penobscot was quite understandable, but more serious matters were afoot, matters too in which he was specially qualified to assist. Carleton was facing the question of what to do with the loyalists. For years they had been concentrating on New York, which on their account was actually

[1] Memorial above, Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[2] Historical Manuscripts Commission, American Manuscripts, iii. 226.

[3] 22 November, 1782. *Idem*, 234.

[4] Army Lists. He at first appears as James Nutting, by an obvious error. 24 March, 1791, he was promoted First Lieutenant, and October 1, 1795, "Captain Lieutenant and Captain." He apparently sold out in 1797.

held by the British beyond the intended date of surrender.[1] The humane general was doing all he could temporarily for the thousands of unfortunates, but the only possible solution of the problem of their final disposal was to send them to the province still loyal like themselves to the king.[2] The movement to deport them to Nova Scotia began in the autumn of 1782. It soon reached proportions really alarming: during the ensuing twelvemonth nearly 30,000 souls were estimated to have arrived at Halifax, Annapolis, Port Roseway, St. John's, etc.[3] The first requisite for these poor exiles was shelter. "They have applied to me," wrote Governor Parr, "to be provided with a Sufficiency of Boards for Erecting small houses to put them under Shelter after their arrival, as such a Provision is indispensably necessary & out of their power to make." [4] In his next letter he speaks of the great want of working people. This scarcity of boards [5] and building material is mentioned

[1] R. Hildreth, *History of the United States*, iii. 439.

[2] Little could these poor refugees foresee that by their very exile they were to perform a still incalculable service to their sovereign and his successors. It is now reckoned that nothing but the vast increase they gave to the population and prestige of Nova Scotia induced the ministry to consider retaining that despised remnant of the American possessions, — yet the nucleus of the present Dominion of Canada! E. P. Weaver, "Nova Scotia during the Revolution." American Historical Review, x. 71.

[3] Parr to North, Halifax, 20 November, 1783. Provincial Archives, Halifax. 47.

[4] Parr to Townshend, Halifax, 15 January, 1783. *Ibid.*

[5] Some of the loyalists before leaving for Halifax "even tore down their

in almost every one of Parr's letters home during 1783:

Another very Considerable Article of Expence My Lord will be the Lumber purchased from the Unavoidable Necessity of Providing these people with some Kind of Shelter & Habitation; for although they might in some Degree have provided themselves with Materials from the Woods yet without some Allowance of Boards their Dwellings would be Wretched & Miserable, I cannot Ascertain the Expence already incurr'd on this Account, but from what is Known it amounts to about £3500.[1]

Here, in short, was the same old field ripe again for John Nutting's best-known talents, and he very soon found himself ordered to report at Halifax once more.[2] The conditions were curiously like those he had faced in 1776. There was the same uncertainty and confusion, the same lack of supplies, the same wintry distress for the same class of true-hearted, tenderly-nurtured refugees, many of them fresh from the warm southern colonies. "It is a most unlucky Season for these unfortunate people to come to this Climate," remarks Parr in November. And a little later:

I cannot better describe the Wretched Situation of those people, than by inclosing your Lordship a list of those Just arrived in the Clinton Transport, destitute of almost everything: Chiefly Women

houses to take the material to the wilderness for new homes." A. C. Flick, *Loyalism in New York during the American Revolution*, 188.

[1] Parr to North, Halifax, 21 October, 1783. Provincial Archives, Halifax. 47.

[2] Memorial to the Commissioners, heard at Halifax, 29 December, 1785. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

& Children all still on board, as I have not yet been Able to find any Sort of place for them & the Cold Setting in Severe.[1]

We must therefore again picture the master carpenter struggling to procure workmen and materials for the "indispensable" little huts into which the poor refugees were only too thankful to crowd themselves. Much of his work must have been of a supervisory and instructive sort — helping the new settlers to help themselves, explaining the mysteries of saw and hammer to the former aristocrats of New York and Philadelphia, illustrating the theory of framing to the mob-harried ex-officials, broken professional men, and ruined merchant princes of that dolorous company. For there was now one great difference from the conditions of seven years before. This time nothing lay beyond. Halifax was not a mere point of transshipment, but a terminus; it was all too certain that there would and could be no return; the new arrivals were to become permanent settlers to live and die in the Nova Scotia wilderness.

For this reason the allotment of regular lands to the loyalists was another necessity, and a considerable force of surveyors pushed out into the forests and barrens of the back country, followed as fast as possible by the wretched army of grantees. Nutting must have made

[1] Parr to North, Halifax, 15 January, 1784. Provincial Archives, Halifax. 47.

many a journey to the new settlements to assist in the house-building problems there. When it came to his own allotment the persuasive Yankee land-speculator drove his usual good bargain. Whether from the representations of his influential patrons at home, or from his own importance in the community, he[1] received a large tract, 2,000 acres,[2] of the rich soil on the southern shore of the beautiful Basin of Minas, near the present town of Newport, and conveniently close to Halifax itself, the provincial metropolis, "yielding & paying to His Majesty . . . a free yearly quit rent of one farthing per Acre."

He did not at once remove to this domain, however, still being busy with his government work. About this time, according to family traditions,[3] he was constructing at Halifax the "Old Chain Battery" near the entrance of the Northwest Arm of the harbor. This, with the chain-boom which it commanded, stretching across the entrance to the Arm, was designed to protect the city from attack in the rear. Perhaps it was during the

[1] Warrant dated 7 September, 1783. 14 Crown Grants, 3. Crown Grants Office, Halifax. The exact location, close to the 1000 acres of "Commissary Roger Johnston," is shown on an ancient traced map in the office, marked "Avon River to Tinney Cape." It was a long narrow strip running back from the water, to give the advantages of both upland and foreshore.

[2] The usual grant was 200 acres to a single man, 500 to a family, 1000 to a field officer in a loyalist regiment, etc. A. C. Flick, *Loyalism in New York during the American Revolution*, 190.

[3] W. F. Parker, *Life of Daniel McNeill Parker*, 12.

progress of the work that his daughter Mercy (named for her paternal grandmother) was born on George's Island in the harbor, 3 July, 1785.[1]

These multifarious occupations, nevertheless, presented nothing either novel or exciting, and he had already begun to grow restive under his "daily and constant attendance on duty," and to make efforts towards bettering his official, or at least his financial position. To that end he had addressed Carleton in quaint yet illuminating phrases:

Penetrated with the most indelible Caractures for the past favours — I humbly beg that I may be pardoned for this intrusion also. . . . The Commander in Chief is not unacquainted with my expectations, in coming out to America with him nor likewise with my disagreeable and unstable situation at this place . . . for a Virtuous and affectionate Wife, and four amible Chilldren,[2] who are entirely dependant on me for their subsistance, that have always had a sufficiency if not affulence till this time. . . . I have spent upwards of eight years, the prime of my Life to support Government I have served faithfully spilt my blood, and at this moment feel the pain of my wounds which I received four years since, all which I have losst, and endured for the support of the Government of Great Britain. I humbly pray that the General in his great humanity penetration and goodness, would be pleased to take my Case into his consideration and appoint me survayor of Lumber for his Majesty's works in this province at 5/– per Day which is the same I had at Penobscott, in addition to my pay as overseer . . . in lieu of being Engineer or any thing in my expectations preecedent, and indeed will prevent my

[1] Nutting Papers. She died young.

[2] Elizabeth, James, and Susanna must therefore all have died during the wanderings and exposures of the war, leaving John, Mary No. 2, Mercy (who died the next year), and little Sophia Elizabeth.

being under the necessity of troubling my Friends in England, or your Excellency any further on Government account.[1]

Evidently the friends in England were not to be disregarded, for in due course came the desired appointment,[2] and "with a Salary of 10/– per Diem."[3]

As a respectable official and a considerable landowner in Nova Scotia, John Nutting would now have had little to worry him, had not the fate of his Penobscot property been wavering in the balance. The peace commissioners were at loggerheads over the eastern boundary between the American and the British possessions. Should it be the Penobscot River or the St. Croix? Long and stubborn was the controversy, but we may almost fancy poor Nutting's bad luck in real estate as tipping the scale at last. Early in January,[4] 1784, the barracks and

[1] Nutting to Carleton, Halifax. 10 May, 1783. Papers in the Royal Institution, iv. 411. (New York Public Library Transcripts.) *Précis* in Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, iv. 76.

[2] "from Colonel Morse of the Engineers . . . dated 23d December 1783." American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 299. Public Library, New York City.

[3] *Idem*, xxviii. 198.

[4] In spite of its romantic interest, the exact date seems still unknown. J. Williamson, "British Occupation of Penobscot." *Maine Historical Society Collections*, 2d Series, i. 398 *et seq.* Carleton had ordered evacuation, with "no delay," more than three months before, and so notified Hancock. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, American Manuscripts, iv. 378, 391. But like a spoiled child, Massachusetts, once her object was within her grasp, almost refused to take it. Local tradition asserts that the importance of the place induced the ministry to send orders to delay the evacuation till the American government had complied with the various articles of the treaty, but that these orders did not arrive till after the garrison had set sail, and nearly reached Halifax. W. Ballard, "Castine, 1815." Bangor Historical Magazine, ii. 51.

store-houses that had cost him so much labor were emptied and fired, and the King's troops "reluctantly" — most reluctantly — abandoned Penobscot Fort, the last post they held on American soil, and New Ireland became one more province in the realm of might-have-been. According to Mr. Secretary Knox,[1] the place never would have been evacuated at all, but would have remained to mark the seaward end of the British boundary-line, had not the jealousy of Wedderburne and the ignorance of Shelburne allowed it slip out of their hands and fixed the American terminus at Eastport instead.[2] Luckily for Massachusetts she had John Adams on the board of treaty commissioners, and his insistent diplomacy achieved what five warlike attempts had failed in.

The statesman mourned for a province *in posse*: the carpenter mourned for good acres *in esse*. His Cambridge property was already hopelessly lost, and it needs but a modicum of imagination to picture his chagrin at beholding his cherished farm on the Bagaduce, his recently-acquired homestead by the fort, his cleared lands and his mill privileges, after all his schemes to

[1] Knox to Cooke. Ealing, 27 January, 1808. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Various, vi. 227.

[2] Most of the loyalists who were forced out of Penobscot removed to St. Andrews, opposite Eastport, thus continuing the border-line existence which they had already elected.

secure them, slip thus from his grasp forever. No recourse remained but to put in vigorous claims for compensation before the commissioners appointed to investigate and reward the services and sufferings of the loyalists. As usual, he lost little time, and on 15 January, 1784, made oath at Halifax to a moving memorial, accompanied by sundry affidavits and schedules regarding his property lost at Cambridge and Penobscot.[1] This he entrusted to Samuel Sparhawk to present for him in London, "as it was not in the power of Mr. Nutting personally to attend your Hon'ble Board within the time limitted for receiving the claims." [2] Consideration of this was apparently deferred till the next year, when the Commissioners visited Halifax to hear claimants on the spot. The indefatigable Nutting thereupon presented another memorial,[3] backing it up with various documentary proofs and the personal testimony both of himself and of sundry other witnesses, including young Lieutenant John. The hearing [4] was on 29 December,

[1] Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[2] Memorial of Sam'l Sparhawk "in behalf of John Nutting, March 25 1784. Bedford Court, R'd Lyon Square." *Ibid.*

[3] Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London. Duplicated in American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 289. Public Library, New York City.

[4] Fully reported in American Loyalists Transcripts, xiii. 297 *et seq.* Public Library, New York City. The witnesses besides Nutting *père et fils*, were Samuel Pool and Nathaniel Bust [? Rust], formerly of Cambridge, and Josiah Henny, of Penobscot. For the latter cf. G. A. Wheeler, *History of Castine*, 201.

1785, and the decision [1] was made the same day. The Commissioners, apparently in view of the various payments already made to him by government, confined themselves to a consideration of his property losses. The Cambridge claims were disallowed, the house "appearing to have been mortgaged to some of his Wife's Family & to be now in their posssession." So was the claim for the "House built at Penobscot after that Post was occupied by the British Troops." So was the claim for "Furniture Lumber & Cattle lost at different places — there being no proof of Loss." In short, only £200 were awarded, for "500 Acres on Penobscot River with Houses Improvements and $\frac{1}{3}^{d}$ of a Saw Mill." Even that was "only conditional. Proof of Confiscation and Sale is required." This was subsequently furnished; and after solemn affidavits from various members of the Walton family as to the Cambridge property,[2] the claimant was "allowed on revision" an additional £100 for that, "after deducting mortge." [3]

Unable therefore to capitalize his loyalty to any

[1] American Loyalists Transcripts, xxviii. 197. Public Library, New York City.

[2] Affidavits of John Walton of Cambridge and Benjamin Walton of Reading, 29 October, 1788. Audit Office, Loyalist Series, Bundle 51, Public Record Office, London.

[3] 12 December, 1788. American Loyalists Transcripts, xxviii. 197. Public Library, New York City. A revision after such an interval certainly suggests considerable powers of "pull" or persuasion.

great extent, John Nutting seems to have settled down into a steady-going farmer of Newport, N. S. He probably carried out to the letter the various conditions on which all the crown grants had been made; — "within three years from date hereof to clear and work three acres of or for every fifty acres in the tract hereby granted . . . or clear and drain three acres of swampy or sunken ground, or drain three acres of marsh, . . . or put or keep on his said lands three Neat Cattle" or "to erect on some part of his said Lands One dwelling house to Contain twenty feet in length by sixteen feet in breadth." He was a man of importance in the community, too, for his influence is unmistakable in the naming of the next town to Newport, perpetuating his wife's family name of Walton. His last child, a son of his old age, was born 12 September, 1787, and named from his two grandfathers James Walton.[1]

So passed the afternoon of life. But was that active and ingenious spirit content in the improvement of a back-country farm and the routine duties of a surveyor of lumber? He had taken responsible part in many a stirring scene, in militia musters, in famous sieges, in

[1] Married Mary Elizabeth MacLean, 10 July, 1813, and had six children. Died 7 July, 1870, at Halifax. Nutting Papers. Stone in Camp Hill Cemetery there. He rose to eminence in the law, was clerk of the crown in the supreme court of the province, and at his death was senior member of the Nova Scotia Bar. He had a 500-acre grant in Newport, close to his father's.

English fort and Spanish prison, in concentration camps, in councils of the state, in fateful despatch-bearing. He had been faithful to his king, even unto banishment and double confiscation. Did he not long to play the man again? When his old wounds burned and stung in the foggy autumn nights, did not his thoughts turn back to his early frontier campaigns, to his "fall trainings" in Cambridge, to his expedition with Colonel Small, to his fight with the privateer? When the surf from Blomidon boomed on his beach, did he not hear again in fancy the guns of the *Vengeance*, or the 24's of Collier at Castine, or the cannonade from Copp's Hill? Did he not sometimes yearn as he passed among the farmer folk for his old neighbors in cultured and beautiful Cambridge, or his polished friends and patrons in glittering London? If we read the man aright, there can be but one answer.

We know, moreover, that to the end his old land-hunger and *wanderlust* were strong upon him, for he was constantly buying, selling, and mortgaging lots,[1] extending his operations as far as Cape Breton and its neighborhood. But his financial ill-luck, like the villain of the melodrama, still pursued him. When he died, intestate, late in 1800, although he was described as "gentleman,"

[1] His numerous local deals may be traced in Windsor (Nova Scotia) Deeds, *passim*.

and as possessing "two lots of 500 acres each in Newport, being part of lands commonly called Mantular Lands" and "a 200 acre lot of Land in the County of Sidney No. 9, and a Town Lot in Manchester, No. 3 Letter M," — yet his estate was found insolvent, and a general sale was made of his property. The inventory included "7 cows, 1 yoak of oxen, 2 yoak of stears, 2 Heighfors," and other livestock, "1 boat," a reminder of his seafaring days, and a curious list of his tools: "3 axes, 1 Handsaw, 1 Crosscut saw, 1 Two feet rule, 2 augers, 2 chissels, 1 foot adds, 1 Tray adds, 2 grindstones, 1 Crow Barr, 1 Jack Plain, 1 Iron square, 1 draw knife, 3 files, 1 pinchers, 1 Do. Hammer." Only the merest necessities of life were exempted and "left in the Hands of the Wido Mary Nutting & her children." [1]

While his relict thus suffered the penalty of his characteristic pecuniary misfortunes, she luckily reaped the benefit of his equally characteristic friendships with the great and influential. The Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, then just quitting the post of commander-in-chief in Nova Scotia, "in consideration of her husband's services to the Crown, and his heavy losses at Cambridge by confiscation, . . . procured for the widow

[1] Hants Probate Records at Windsor, Nova Scotia. His son-in-law, Daniel McNeill, was appointed administrator, 21 November, 1800.

a special pension from the Crown." [1] Upon this subsidy, aided perhaps by her children's contributions, she managed to eke out an existence, possibly precarious but certainly protracted. She died about 1831, at "Loyal Hill." [2]

Such is the history, so far as gathered, of a Cambridge man born and bred, interesting not only for his all too uncommon type of personality among his loyalist neighbors, but for the curious speculations arising from his share in the historical events in which he played a part. If, for example, the strategists of Great Britain, uninfluenced by his solicitude for his eligible farm, had established the post in Maine at some other point than Penobscot — a point on which the attack of the Provincials might have been successful, — if the only organized naval force of the colonies, instead of disappearing utterly, had returned, encouraged by victory, to take, under the masterly strategy of Washington, a definite and coördinated part in the current and subsequent campaigns of the Revolution, — who can say how much the struggle would have been altered and shortened? What would have been the effect on the story of American privateering? Again, if that post had been to the eastward of Penobscot, even had the result of the expedition

[1] W. F. Parker. *Life of Daniel McNeill Parker*, 12.
[2] Nutting Papers.

been the same as it was, where might the Canadian boundary now be fixed? What chances for an actual New Ireland of to-day?

And the Muse of History (doubtless a polyglot dame) smiles inscrutably and replies, *Quien sabe?*